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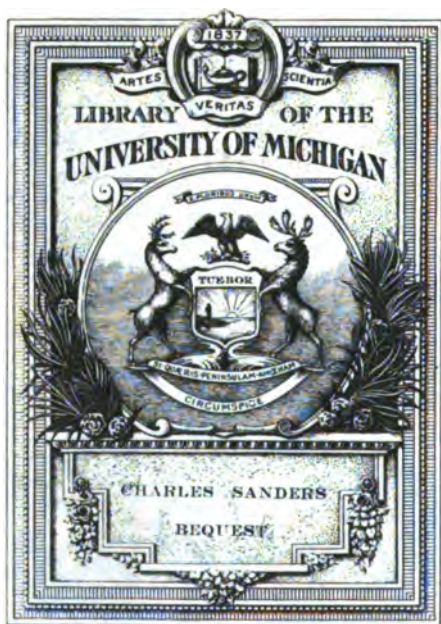
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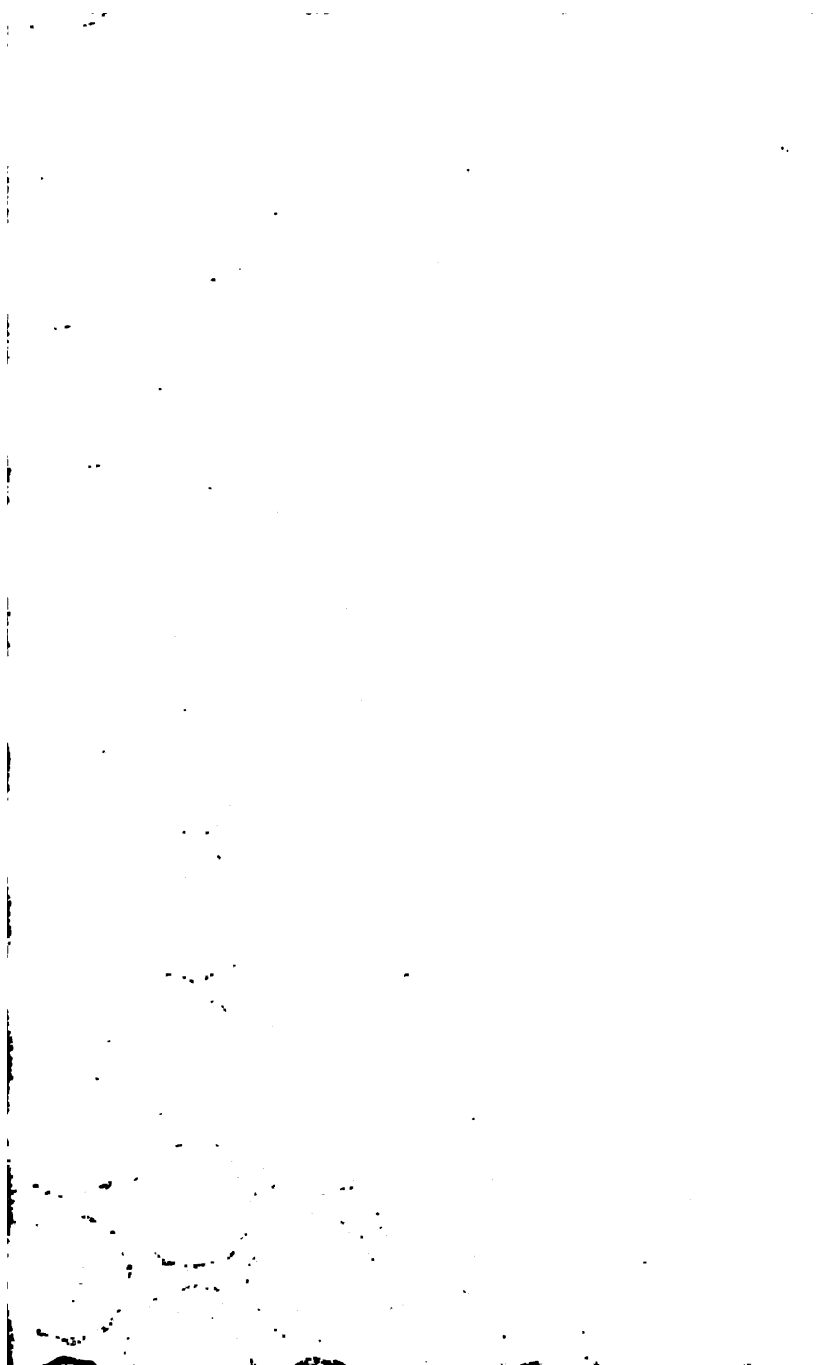
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828
G773L
1840



T. Graham

Published by George Roberts

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS,
OR
TALES OF THE ROADSIDE;

PICKED UP IN THE FRENCH PROVINCES

BY
A WALKING GENTLEMAN.

Grattan, Thomas Polley.

"I love France so well that I will not part with a Village of it; I will have it all mine."—KING HENRY V.

A NEW EDITION,

REVISED AND CORRECTED;

WITH AN ORIGINAL INTRODUCTION, AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,

BY THE AUTHOR.

BOSTON:
GEORGE ROBERTS, 5 STATE STREET,
1840.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1840,
BY GEORGE ROBERTS,
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Charles Sanders Request

4-17-28

3v.

TO THE READER.

Circumstances out of my control, but of no interest to the public, have hitherto prevented the appearance of a complete and uniform edition of this work ; and it was not until I found the difficulties in England insurmountable that I resolved to bring it out in a foreign country. The manner in which my present publisher proposes to fulfil my object leaves me, however, nothing to wish for but that I may have been able to impart some new interest to these volumes, by adding to each of the tales an explanatory note, and to lessen their imperfections, by making occasional corrections in the text.

Several years have elapsed since the first series of Highways and Byways was offered to the world. The flattering reception it met with was to me most un hoped for. No successful author, if I may without presumption take that title to myself, had ever less cause for confidence, either on the score of previous qualifications or of the common means for forwarding the interests of his book. But I firmly believe there is a great deal of chance in those matters. Many works of merit fail altogether, with almost all the elements of prosperity in

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their favor; while others, far inferior, prosper beyond all proportion to their value, by some lucky contingency of public taste, eye or of fashionable caprice. It is not for me to sift the matter too nicely. It is enough to state that in the present instance I am more than satisfied. For I can most unaffectedly say that I am this moment to the full as much surprised as gratified, by the favorable result of these my first attempts at prose fiction. But hold! I must not travel too fast; nor make a premature confession. Whatever verisimilitude these stories may possess must rest undisturbed, at least 'till the reader reaches the explanatory notes before alluded to.

There are two points of view in which these volumes may justify some few prefatory remarks at the present period, and I am glad to have a fair opportunity of putting them forward in my own person.

Without presuming to say that the higher purposes of philanthropy or philosophy led to the production of the "Highways and By-way," I am convinced that a latent desire to contribute to the removal of error influenced me as I went on. The tales were written under the usual impulse which urges the imaginative author into composition and the ambitious one into print. But any decided expectation of utility was incompatible with the poor opinion I had of my work. Yet that it was hailed by the English public, as a means towards the removal of national prejudices against France, and that, as far as it went, it tended to excite a better feeling between the two countries, is no less true than that I had believed it unworthy of a far less valuable purpose—the mere amusement of Romance readers.

I may now, therefore, confess myself proud in the feeling that I was among the foremost of English writers after the peace, to give an insight into the domestic character of the French people. Were I to indulge that feeling at present, I should go here much deeper into the subject than I have done in the progress of my stories, and endeavor to establish, on the only solid grounds of reasoning—the evidence

of facts—the superiority of that people in many of the higher as well as the more amiable attributes of national greatness. But I resist the temptation, in the double hope that much of what I should have to dwell on has made itself, within the last few years, too obvious for doubt or cavail; and that I may shortly have a more fitting opportunity of entering at large upon the pleasing task.

It is, then, only in reference to this book in its material character, setting aside all consideration of the spirit in which it was conceived or completed, that I mean to state a few particulars, which, if they afford but small interest to general readers, may at least convey a cheering lesson to writers, as inexperienced and little confident as I was myself at the period to which I now go back.

Happening to meet in Paris, somewhere about the year 1820, with Mr. Washington Irving, at that time very popular from the recent appearance of his "Sketch Book," it was at his suggestion that I attempted a couple of short prose tales, founded on my recollections of the South of France, where I had previously spent some years. I sent my manuscript to London, and offered it to one of the periodicals. My stories were rejected and returned to me. Mr. Irving happened to be with me when the packet came back; and, in a spirit which I then thought far more friendly than critical, he consoled me for this rebuff, by assuring me that my contributions were too good for the miscellany into which they were refused admission; and he urged me to extend them, by the introduction of more incident, while he gave me at the same time some valuable hints of which I quickly availed myself.

Piqued on the one hand and encouraged on the other, I fell to work *con amore*; and not only enlarged the first two tales but completed as many more of greater extent than they; and having matter sufficient for a good sized octavo volume, I took the whole with me to London, bearing a strong letter of recommendation to a gen-

tleman high in literature, and in a position to be essentially useful to a tyro like myself. He read, or at least told me he read, a great part of my MS; and the advice he gave me was to take it back and reduce its redundancy, or in his own words "to cut down the long grass;" and he promised me that, when so revised, he would be happy to receive it from me, and would take upon himself the necessary measures for its publication, "under his own wing."

Somewhat disheartened, I did as he recommended; but I set about my task with reluctance. To distend my materials I had found easy enough; but to reduce them again was an ungracious and difficult operation. Mowing away the "grass" was like cutting through my own flesh—and my inexperience left it doubtful whether I did it judiciously or the contrary. Completed however, to the best of my judgment, I confided my MS, to a friend, and sent it over to my literary patron; and great was my mortification to receive for reply to the letter which accompanied it, a verbal message, to the effect that I had totally mistaken him, that he wished well to my work, but had no intention of taking on himself the responsibility of recommending it to a publisher!

This treatment produced the result which any thing analogous to it has produced in me through life. I was at once disgusted and roused; and I resolved to take the matter into my own hands. I accordingly went to London, and regaining possession of my MS. (which by the bye was missing for several weeks, and nearly lost by the negligence of my friend, who set small value on it) I proceeded to offer it to a bookseller of eminence and enterprise. He rejected it *in toto*, as not worth the cost of printing. I tried another house. They hesitated and considered, and finally did like the first. A third gave me no more favorable answers. And at length a fourth publisher, assuring me that his literary counsellor found some scattered passages of merit in the work, offered to run the risk of bring-

ing out a very limited number of copies, provided I would pay half the expenses and give additional matter for the completion of three volumes, instead of one; adding that no work of fiction had a chance of success unless it appeared under the sanction of that magic quantity.

This was enough. I tied up my loose sheets, very indifferent as to their safe carriage, returned to France, threw the bundle into an old trunk, where it lay unthought of for at least two years; and it was by mere chance that it was not torn up, at any time during that period, for fire-lighting or any other ignoble domestic purpose.

Talked of in a small circle of intimate associates, the manuscript was dragged again to light, and at the persuasion of two among them, a Gentleman and Lady—of undoubted good taste, and warmly interested for any production of mine—I consented to read one of the stories aloud, with the hope of obtaining a verdict that would at any rate put to shame the disparaging opinion of the London publishers. An evening was appointed, my lamp trimmed, chairs drawn round the fire, expectation excited, and the “*Vilaine tete*” (as the shortest of the stories) spread out before me. I had not got three parts through it when both my auditors were fast asleep! A counteracting check of wounded pride alone withheld me from flinging the sheets into the flames.

Consigned once more to its obscure retreat, my manuscript had most assuredly never been disturbed by me. But an accomplished and somewhat eccentric friend, who,—all his life in opposition to authority, and having an especial contempt for the *ex cathedra* dictates of “the trade”—had been one of the first to express a favorable opinion of my hitherto unhappy efforts in literature, induced me to let him act as sponsor and *chaperon* to this still unchristened offspring of my brain. I gave a cold consent, only stipulating that my name should not be hazarded in connection with the public appearance of

my progeny, if it were indeed destined to see the light at all.— This condition was strictly adhered to, when a bookseller was at length discovered hazardous enough to embark a mite of his large capital and rising reputation in so doubtful a speculation as the “High-ways and By-ways.”

The work was published, reviewed, and stamped with success.— Edition succeeded edition, to my great surprise, and the bookseller’s no small profit. This I was, by agreement, to have *shared*. I received a portion of it certainly. But the pecuniary remuneration, and the public favor, which made the disposal of each subsequent series an easy and advantageous matter, were as nothing compared to my triumph over the collective sentences of disparagement, pronounced before publication; and vainly attempted afterwards, by one or two of those sordid beings who, for hire or from jealousy, are ever ready to run down a reputation through the medium of anonymous criticism. But no one has had more reason than myself to be satisfied with his treatment at the hands of reviewers. More than justice has been gratuitously done to my volumes, by some of the best, as well as the most generous writers in that line of literature. Where an exception fell by chance within my observation, I always strove to forget it. If some officious friend good-naturedly called my attention to it, I invariably neglected the hint. And even when wantonly attacked and misrepresented, I have never thought it advisable to remonstrate or refute, partly from respect and gratitude towards so indulgent a public as that which has judged me, and in a great measure from my aversion to a war of words, that rarely has any manly or dignified result.

I hope that this sketch of the rise and progress of the “High-ways and By-ways” may produce the effect it was meant for, on writers who may be too easily deterred by discouragement or too deeply affected by dispraise. To place little trust on the judgment or promis-

es of others is the best moral of this true story ; and that one ought to give one's self and one's productions every fair chance in the lottery of life may be inculcated as a supplementary axiom scarcely less valuable. Did I wish to be didactic I might utter many more aphorisms, founded on the experience which this work has procured me. But I spare my readers on the serious score, in hopes that they will bear with me a little longer on the light.

I wish I could record all the pleasant results which have sprung from the publication of these stories, and thus prove the general truth of the French saying, "*il y a toujours compensation.*" The kindnesses, the attentions, and the intimacies springing from this small plant of authorship, have formed a canopy of shelter against much of the ills of life ; and if the shower was at times so heavy as to penetrate even that, my gratitude should at least be nothing the less. I am sure no one ought to set a higher (comparative) value on his books than I on mine. Though far from thinking these the least unworthy of my productions, I love them as we love our earliest born, whom we have rocked in the cradle with the listless joy of novelty, and played with in the nursery, while hope was as young, as smiling, and as undefined as they, its emblems. Ah, if *our children* could always retain, like our writings, their youth, their freshness and their bloom !

* * * * *

Selecting at random out of a crowd of incidents connected with the authorship of this work, I shall mention three or four which particularly amused or interested me ;

Travelling one splendid summer's day on the top of a stage coach through the romantic passes of the Derbyshire hills and valleys, I entered into conversation with a fellow passenger, to whom I listened for many hours with extreme pleasure, from the vivacity and variety of his discourse. On parting at night he begged to know my

name, and on my giving it, he exclaimed, "What! the author of High-ways and By-ways?"

"The same."

I cannot repeat the words which followed; but the substance of the communication was that he had himself published a volume of the same nature as mine, on the same day, and through the same book-seller; that while my book had the good luck to meet with great success, his had totally failed; but, with the true generosity of talent, he had been one of the foremost to review his successful rival in one of the monthly publications of the day; and I remembered well the article, which had been the first to glad my eyes with the little looked-for language of encomium and encouragement.

I have never met this gentleman since. But I understand he has been for some years a distinguished political writer; and if ever he sees this preface he will find that I am not forgetful of our midsummer day's acquaintanceship, or of his more enduring title to my esteem.

As a *pendant* to this anecdote, I cannot resist relating a freak, which arose, perhaps, out of the consciousness of successful authorship.

After spending a short day and a long evening with a friend at Amiens, on my way from Calais to Paris, a couple of years and more later than the period of my last-told adventure, I squeezed myself, in the dark and cold of a winter's night, into the vacant place in the *Malle Poste*, between two drowsy Englishmen who were in snoring possession of the corners. As morning dawned they began to talk, and long before we reached the breakfast place I learned that they were manufacturers from the North, who had crossed the channel on a speculation; and that they had taken as their guide-book to French character, manners, and scenes, no less an authority than my own *Tales of the Road Side*, several volumes of which were

stuffed into the pockets of the carriage, and frequently referred to, quoted, and extravagantly be-praised by each of my companions.

I was, no doubt, tickled and pleased at all this; and the way in which I gave loose to my gratification was by dissenting from every citation, undervaluing every opinion, criticising the style, and at length denying not only the truth of the statements but the most trifling claim to merit of the anonymous author. Inflamed to a violent height of admiration, probably from the mere spirit of obstinacy and a John Bullish dislike of contradiction, my companions waxed warm, raised my pages to the dignity of oracles, vehemently—almost fiercely—espoused my quarrel against myself, indignantly taunted me with my want of candor towards an absent man,—thus making me a living illustration of Lord Castlereagh's physiological puzzle of a man turning his back on himself—and finally parted from me in the court yard of the Paris Post Office, with a poor opinion of me personally, but a positive infatuation for me in my anonymous existence.

It is beyond doubt that one of the best ways to serve a work is by unfairly abusing it. I wish this anecdote might some day meet the eye of a quondam "poor devil author," since accidentally tacked to the tail of diplomacy, who, as I have been told, made my writings the subjects of the most ribald abuse for several years in sundry quarterly, monthly, and weekly publications, which I never happened to see, and which died and left "no sign." I am certain that such a censor "did good service to the state"—of my reputation, and through it to that of my finances.

An English gentleman, an *attaché* to one of the Northern Embassies, was once introduced to me in Paris at his own request; and some opening complimentary phrases were followed by a volley of good-humored reproaches, at my having, by the influence of my descriptions and stories, been the unconscious cause of his having got

some months leave of absence, equipped himself with shooting dress, gun, knapsack and common-place book, and accompanied by his dog, having walked over some hundreds of miles of the very ground I had traced, in search of the individuals mentioned in these volumes, and of adventures which might at least offer a parallel to those I have so faithfully recorded. "But," added he, with a *naivete* which I could scarce refrain from smiling at, "not one of those individuals did I meet, nor a single adventure of any kind whatever. Do, pray then, tell me were the stories truth or fiction?"

Perhaps he may fall in with this edition. If so I refer him to the last page of it for information.

Some time subsequent to the completion of the last series, and when I had turned into subjects requiring more research, I had occasion to consult historical works and rare old chronicles, which were to be met with only in the public libraries of the Continent.—To one of those I had recourse; and addressing myself to the librarian, a modest, dust-covered, and obsequious-mannered young man, he obligingly offered me, as *un homme de lettres*, all the facilities of reading and note-taking which it was in his power to give me. But when I requested a loan of the required volumes at my *domicile*, for the greater convenience of taking extracts, he assured me with great apparent sincerity and regret that the orders of his superiors were positive against my request, and that it was *impossible* for him to comply. Not pressing the matter further, I gave him my card, that my name might be inserted on the list of habitual readers.

"Quoi!" exclaimed he, in the translated phrase of my Derbyshire fellow-traveller, "l'auteur de 'High-ways and By-ways?'"

"Le meme."

"Sir," said he, "you may take a cart-load of the books home with you, at your choice," and he added something more, too flattering to be inserted here. The acquaintanceship thus pleasantly formed,

was subsequently of great value to me. The former Librarian is now an Ambassador; "l'Auteur" is no longer a mere *homme de lettres*; and it is no dishonor to either, that, whatever be their respective stations or estimation in the world, they owe it entirely to themselves.

I must not yield to the temptation of running on in this style of egotistical gossip. I was half tempted to add a characteristic anecdote of Coleridge, on the subject of this oft-told title of "Highways and Byways," but I mean to insert it in a more appropriate place, some day, with various sketches of poetical, political, princely and other individuals, collected during a more than twenty years' residence on the continent of Europe.

I cannot avoid adding a few words on the varied style and tendency of the reviews which these Tales have elicited. It is impossible to imagine anything more contradictory or absurd than some of those have been, in the midst of much sound criticism and excellent advice. While the majority have pronounced favorably on these writings, some have condemned them altogether. They have been lauded as "highly worthy of their main object, the removal of national prejudice." They have been condemned as "adapted to keep up and foster national ill will." My style has been pronounced that of a "a gentleman and a scholar." It has been denounced as "so unscholastic that an attempt to translate it into French or Latin was matter of great difficulty." My *forte* has been on one hand asserted to be "low farce;" on another "the comic" was declared "not to be at all my forte." I have been called "a creature of the Bourbons," by one critic; "a Jacobin" by another. I have been in one publication pronounced "an imitator of Washington Irving;" while another states that *his* "Tales of a Traveller" had never been written but for the success of mine. I have been contrasted disadvantageously with one of the most flimsy and vulgar; and compared most flatteringly with one of the greatest of romance writers; and finally, my tales have been pronounced as "equal, for their length

to anything in the language." As to the conflicting opinions on individual scenes and characters throughout the various tales, it would be impossible to quote them within any reasonable bounds. But one review particularly amused me, as a glorious specimen of its class. It was one which declared that in "*Caribert the Bear Hunter*," (a Pyrenean story be it remarked,) there were "some good sketches of the peasants in the *Apennines*, and a fine description of sunrise in the *Alps*."

After these notices, what author would value reviewing at more than its worth? My own system, an inbred,—not an adopted one—has ever most truly been, to be gratified with and grateful for praise; to hearken with respect to honest disapprobation; and to hold abuse in scorn.

It is not for me to calculate on the rank which may be adjudged to these volumes, among the productions of their class and of their day. It is certain that the form which they now appear in, gives them a better chance than they have hitherto had for a lasting place on the bookshelves of romance readers. In one respect only will I venture to point out a merit in the following pages. Every descriptive passage is reality; a faithful transcript of scenery, in the aspect in which I saw it. For the rest I throw myself on the indulgence of my readers; and more particularly for those parts in which imagination may appear exuberant, taste false, or judgment faulty.

T. C. GRATTAN.

Boston, February, 1840.

TO
WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED

BY
HIS ADMIRER AND FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE, PROLOGUE, AVANT-PROPOS,

OR

INTRODUCTION.

**"The nature of a preface is rambling, never wholly out of the way
nor in it."—DRYDEN.**

VOL. I. 2^a



PREFACE, PROLOGUE, AVANT-PROPOS,

OR

INTRODUCTION.

If unencumbered men, who travel for pleasure, knew half the pleasures of travelling on foot, post-masters and carriage-owners would soon be left to the patronage of those who have the happiness, or the misery, of being married; to effeminate striplings, and old bachelors.

Who, with the life and spirit of youth within him, blessed with health and sound in mind, would *choose* to waste his weary hours in the solitude of a post-chaise, or pay his money at a diligence-office, in proportion to the speed which hurries him through all that might interest a rational man?

Who, with limbs to move on, and a heart to feel, would abandon the companionship of nature's self; encage his body in a public vehicle; and stifle the young buds of thought in its contracted atmosphere?

Can we expect to know a people by such flying association? Is it among travellers, every one of whom might on his journey doubt his own identity;—from the merchant counting on his fingers in the corner,—from the lover whose thoughts fly back in a direct ratio with the haste of his advance, and whose eyes are so full of his absent mistress, that he thinks he sees her in the gruff old lady who feeds

her parrot on the seat before him ;—is it from the friend, the parent, or the child, who, going to meet the holy happiness of domestic welcome, thinks the carriage retrogrades ;—is it from these the foreign traveller would look for national fact or individual reality ; or in their random and undigested chatter hope to find a mine of sound and valuable truth ?

No, no, sir ! take your knapsack, and your stick, and walk ! Linger, and lounge, and loiter on the way. Throw yourself among the people, as if you came by chance, and not from curiosity. Spend a day here, and a week there. Be generous, but not profuse. Excite gratitude, not envy. Let information flow in gushing springs, but do not strive to force it up by pumping. Do all this, and a little time will show you how wise you have become.

I am answered, perhaps, that time is not given to all men in the same profuseness ; that where I have a year to spare, another may have but a month. Then, I reply, spend your month with profit. Measure at the end of it the minds you have analysed, not the leagues you have driven over ; and if you have but sauntered through one district of a foreign nation, in communion with the inhabitants, you are better informed than he who has galloped from Calais to Paris, and thence to Florence, Rome, and Naples.

But a crusty opponent might say that this is all labor in vain,—tell me that most men travel merely to talk of it,* or that "*Voyager est un triste plaisir*,"† cite the Scotch proverb, "Sen' a fool to France, and he'll come back a fool,"—quote, gravely, if he will,

" Dans maint auteur, de science profonde,
J'ai lu qu'on perd a trop courir, le monde,"‡

and add to these authorities, that if the object is knowledge, it may be had at home ; that the external features of all countries pretty nearly resemble one another ; that towns and villages are composed of the same kind of materials ; and that man himself is everywhere

* " La curiosité n'est que vanité ; le plus souvent on ne veut savoir que pour en parler ; on ne voyagerait pas sur mer pour ne jamais en rien dire, et pour le seul plaisir de voir, sans esperance de s'en entretenir avec personne "

PASQUAL.

† Madame de Staël.

‡ Gresset.

the same, a two-legged animal without feathers. Why then go out of our way to explore the outward show of things, or even the nooks and crevices of human nature?

Such a reasoner would be quickly yelped at by the open-mouthed pack, which sweeps through foreign scenes, harking and baying at men or the moon; and he would be stung by the drones who hum, and buzz, and flutter over all, but bring back not one drop of honey to the hive.

Yet there is some justness in the cavil of my cynic. Nature has made all things of the same stuff, and distributed them in nearly the same proportions. Man, the great master-piece, is everywhere the same; five to six feet in height, and seventy years of life; four-limbed and two-handed; with five senses, thirty-four cerebral organs, and one, two, or more ideas—as it may be. Such is his common form and medium definition. A straggling monster may now and then shock us as less, or startle us as more than man; but the lover of miracle and marvel seeks in vain for a group of Cyclops, or a race of giants. The grosser works of the creation, too, are all confined within certain limits. Climate, indeed, is comparatively cold or hot; but a fire or a pair of bellows can transport the mind, through the medium of the senses, from the frigid to the torrid zone, and *vice versa*. Unsightly monsters, pillars, or even temples, may be brought to us by ships. We cannot, to be sure, carry off mountains or rivers; but, if we will be satisfied with miniature models, let us turn to our own romantic hills and lovely streams, and we shall only want a magnifying glass to show us all that nature holds of the sublime and beautiful.

Yet all this is not enough, at least for us, who, laughing at the theories of the disparaging physiologists, believe man better than the brutes. To know him rightly, we must travel: not his stature nor his deeds—description and history tell us these—but his mind and his feelings can be laid open, his resemblance to or contrast with ourselves be displayed, only by the actual intercourse of heart with heart, and soul with soul, when every artificial exhibition is gone by, and every cunning caution lulled to rest.

This is not to be done at home; at least I can never understand the biped of my own locality. There I move as in a family circle. Every Englishman is a brother to the rest; and though one may grumble in a louder key, or another growl in a deeper tone, still the

social resemblance is the same. I go into a distant country, and I meet new faces, but not one mind *seems* strange to me. I *fancy* I knew all that passes in each round and honest-looking head; yet the brain within is often spreading a veil to keep its secrets from my view; and every idea coiling itself up like a rattlesnake, to hide its real extent, and hit me the hardest when I think myself most safe.

Thus it is, that by the confidence of the observer, and the caution of those he works on, by common resemblances, and sympathies, we are as unable to know the character of our countrymen as we are to depict our own.

And in looking on the natural features of my country, the analogy holds good. The landscape, the rosy cheeks, and fair complexions, seem all to have been growing up with me from earliest youth, and to be identified with every hour of my existence. Everything is familiar, because it has been so long within my reach; and though I may be absent from my proper fireside, still I have passed no line. I have slid on in harmony and in tune, from *dolce* to *forte*; from *majeur* to *minor*; from the subject to the variation, and back again; but in three or four days, at farthest, I can be sure of sitting in my own chair, and of poking my own poker between the bars of my own grate.

But let me cross the channel, and I feel instantly the magic of imagination. I already breathe freer, although still in sight of Dover. I am hotter, though the climate is the same. I tread cautiously, and pick my steps, although the roads be of the like materials, or the soils be similar. I see mortality around me—flourishing, decaying, dead—just as I left it behind. I look in the faces before me. I pore over, search, and scrutinize. I mark on every hand a novelty or a wonder;—yet all the while I am reading in the same old book, only that it is decked up in a different binding. But so it is. We want this stimulus to give action to our mental energies; and we find as mighty a difference between man in England and man in France, as we do between a plain mutton-chop and a *cotelette à la maitre d'hôtel*.

Let us then travel; and if we do so with our eyes open (I mean the eyes of the mind,) we shall return home wiser than when we set out, but knowing nothing more than we might have known before we started. The sum of all is, the defectiveness of man. The knowledge that let *circumstances* debase him here, or elevate him

there ; let him show in this century his fair side, or in that his false one, he is still, in all seasons and all climes, essentially the same : thirsting and toiling for perfectibility, but doomed, by the very nature of the struggle, to prove his irredeemable imperfection.

As to the prejudice with which we are loaded, it is the disease of our nature. Every nation possesses the virus, but we inoculate with it. We nurture it as an antidote against something worse ; and on quitting England lay in a plentiful fund, as if it were an amulet,

Sans quoi le cœur, victime des dangers,
Revient chargé de vices étrangers.

But let us see our illiberality in its true light. It is the evil of solation, and a tax paid for security. It is therefore, perhaps, neither a fault nor a misfortune. With its acknowledged possession we may safely say that, in many of the substantial advantages of life, we are superior to our neighbours,—but are we so in all ? That we have the unamiable folly to believe so is the fact ; but this is not the place to examine its causes. It is enough to know that they exist, and that after a long course of culture, they generally end in the Englishman landing on the shores of France, louring and black, and charged with prejudice, as a thunder cloud with electricity.

Everything he first observes is a kind of moral *paratonnerre*, to draw down the flash of his disdain. The lazy-looking people ; the dirty inns ; the beggarly appearance of the open country and the wild uncomfortable aspect of the towns, with their formidable barriers and strict police, give but melancholy notions of French vivacity, liberty, or enjoyment. He hurries through these outposts of information, and reaches the capital. There he sees nothing but splendid misery and comfortless magnificence ; palaces and promenades,—the one hemmed round with hovels, the other intrenched in mud. Thus viewing the superficies of things he gallops on ; returns by a different, or, perhaps, the same track ; sees in every new place the counterpart of what he left behind ; and springing at last upon the pier at Dover, raises his hands in thankfulness to find himself again on the world's sole enviable spot of earth.*

* I cannot refrain from quoting here a sentence of Voltaire, so much in the spirit of true philosophy that I should have chosen it for my motto, had it not been in a foreign language. " Si les nations de l'Europe, au lieu de

• Another class, despising this species of traveller, and resolved to be better, set themselves down in France—but where? In some well-recommended town, swarming with their countrymen, where everything—society, manners, time, and even temperature, are endeavored to be regulated on the English plan. They meet French people, and they see French character; but the first in masquedade, and the latter in its worst point of view. A vitiated emulation is the impulse of the natives. They want the homely honest simplicity of rustic life, and have not the stores of information which abound in Paris. But they have pretensions to everything, and are, in comparison to the capital, what a shallow pool is to a greater river; reflecting on their service the mightiest objects, without depth to embrace their extent, or force to bear their weight.

It is not in towns, then, we must expect to find true national traits, but least of all in French towns. Still one field is open to the true observer—a country residence; where, separate from English pride and French presumption, he may display and look upon their contrasts. Here let a family fix; for if good fellowship, good-nature, true-politeness, and heartfelt humanity exist on earth, I do believe them to be found in the quiet circle of such intercourse. That faults are even here is but too true; but what would we have? Perfection? Alas! alas!

But I want to write tales, not dissertations; instead of speculations, to give facts; in place of essays, anecdotes. I would rather shake a prejudice, than build a pyramid; and as a straw can decide the inclination of a balance, so perhaps, may these volumes fix the bias of some undetermined mind. When I flung aside the staff that bore me on my pilgrimage, and took up the pen that was to note down a portion of its progress, I did so in the hope of contributing my mite towards an act of national justice. The means I employ are humble; the pretension which puts them forward less than nothing. I look to public indulgence as the best antidote against individual severity:—and, knowing propitiation to be hopeless, must only, in the old spirit of peripatetic pride, throw defiance in the teeth of the academicians.

se mépriser injustement les unes les autres, voulaient faire une attention moins superficielle aux ouvrages et aux manières de leurs voisins, non pas pour en rire, mais pour en profiter, peut-être de ce commerce mutuel d'observations naitrait ce gout general qu'on cherche si inutilement."

ESSAI SUR LES MŒURS, &c.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

The unnecessary infliction of a new preface would be a bad return for the public kindness, which has called for a new edition of this work. I scarcely feel warranted in putting such a penalty on the indulgence of my readers ; but I am in some measure forced to say a few words here, in consequence of remarks which have fallen from more than one of the critics, who have considered my book deserving of their notice.

It was observed that the work bore evidence of a prepossession towards the reigning family of France ; and objected, that questions relative to the revolution were treated with prejudice connected with that prepossession. The first of these remarks is no doubt justified by the tone of one of the tales, which is quite in unison with what I felt when it was written, three years ago. An obscure and anonymous author can scarcely presume to claim a sympathy with princes. He may, however, without any undue pretension, express strong interest in the well-being of a nation. *That* I felt, and still feel, for the country where some of my happiest days have been spent, and many of my best attachments formed. Believing that France, just freed from a galling despotism, was most likely to enjoy security and welfare under the constitutional rule of the Bourbons, and convinced that such was the opinion of the great mass of the nation, I was inclined to let my notions on the subject exhibit the prevalent impression. They were strengthened by several circum-

stances of an individual rather than a family nature, such as the heroic conduct of the Duchess of Angouleme at Bordeaux, and the subsequent murder of the Duke of Berry.

With regard to the *objection* before noticed I have but to say, that the subjects of most of the tales being interwoven with events of the revolution, I could not avoid touching upon the latter; but I never ventured to argue such topics as abstract questions, being desirous to skim their surface in their reference to particular results, rather than go beyond my depth, by treating them as general principles.

When I wrote, no idea was entertained, by any one, I believe, of the war which has since been undertaken against Spain. Feeling on that point in common with every thousand less by an unit, perhaps, of my countrymen, I have omitted in the present edition the only sentence (and one quite inadvertently allowed to stand in the former) which could bear a construction favorable to that enterprise. As I was absent from England at the period of printing, I had not an opportunity of making this, and some slighter alterations in the proper time.

I shall only add, that even this short statement should not have been obtruded on the public, indifferent to my name and opinions, had I not been anxious to clear up to my friends, acquainted with both, what might have appeared a contradiction.

JUNE, 1823.

THE
FATHER'S CURSE.

Who shall tellen a tale after a man,
He mote rehearse as nye as ever he can;
Or else he mote tellen his tale untrue,
Or feine things, or finde words new.

CHAUCER.



THE FATHER'S CURSE.

CHAPTER I.

Travelling, as I always do, without guide or compass, it is no merit of mine if I sometimes light on pleasing scenes, or mix with interesting people. I had traversed France from frontier to frontier; cut across the highways, and struck into the open country; passed by where curiosity is generally arrested; loitered in spots unknown to fame or fashion; always yielding to impulse or to whim. Chance has so often led me into scenes of soft adventure, that I asked no other pilot; but had I made the most nicely balanced choice, I could not have better suited my taste than in that district called Le Perigord, and the country bordering upon it.

Scampering along the course of the river Dordogne, I had left far behind me the mountains of Auvergne; but I occasionally stopped to observe the autumnal sunbeams playing round their distant peaks. I dwelt on the recollection of the wondrous scenes they exhibit, and marvelled that so few of our travellers had explored their secret charms—until I recollected that they were inaccessible to the approach of four-wheeled carriages. They gradually melted from my sight, and new and different beauties turned my thoughts aside.

I had seen the Dordogne in the heart of those rugged hills—born in volcanic sources, nursed on beds of lava, and swathed with basaltic bands; a riotous little stream, hurrying on its passage with the waywardness of a noisy child. A little further I had fancied it to glide along in the quiet and smiling loveliness of female youth, through groups of gentle acclivities, of wild yet verdant aspect. Now, I paced its widely-separated banks, and marked it swelling into full grown beauty, rolling its course with conscious dignity along congenial plains; while tufts of stately trees, converted by my imagination into enamored lovers, wooed their liquid mistress with bent and graceful branches, which wafted salutation, or sipped her passing sweets. A little more, thought I, and this proud beauty sinks into that sea, where all rivers are finally lost!—and I was just getting

into a train of deep analogies, when I was roused by the flapping wings of a covey of partridges behind me. I turned, and saw my dog fixed steadily at a point at some distance. I cocked my gun, but the game had escaped me. Ranger came slowly forward with a surly and reproving look, such as many a musing sportsman has observed, when the faithful follower, who has done so well his duty would tell you that you have neglected yours.

In all my rambling I am accompanied by my dog; not that I despise the companionship of man—far from it. But where can we find a friend so like ourselves, with thoughts and feelings so moulded into ours, that he will think and talk, stand still, move forward, eat, drink, and sleep in perfect unison with us? This strict coincidence exists not between men; and without this, such a course as mine is better run alone. Pursuits there are, and pleasures, it is true, which two minds sufficiently congenial may soothingly follow together. Hours, nay days entire, of social fellowship have fallen to my lot; and I look forward with hope to a renewal of such intercourse, when ripened thought shall have mellowed the young fruit of earlier associations. But to wander for months in foreign scenes, yet be not a stranger in them; to give the mind up to that reflective abandonment which likes to revel uncontrolled, you must have no companion but your dog. With him you have no ceremony to constrain you; and he is ready for your every mood. If you are gay, he frisks and capers; if sad, he trudges slowly on, and thinks, or seems to think, as deeply as yourself. When you eat, he has always a ready appetite; when out of the reach of food, he murmurs not. Lie down to sleep, he is your guardian; rise up when you will, you will find him freshly at your call. A gun is the natural accompaniment of a connexion like this. It gives both employment and amusement to man and beast. It is a passport for the woods and mountains; an excuse for idleness; a remedy against painful thoughts and removes the mendicant and vagabond air from a poor fellow who journeys with a wallet and a staff. In France one runs but little risk of stoppage or impediment. I do not speak of the environs of cities, of fortified towns, or military posts. These naturally bring with them a train of ills—suspicion, petty tyranny, and insult. But in the happier portions of the kingdom, where rustic occupation takes place of warlike possession; where the fields are paced by the husbandman, not trodden down by the soldier, a traveller may feel himself at home. A straggling gendarme sometimes asks to see his license, but a foreign face is nearly always a sufficient protection. As I, however, was furnished with both, I walked unmolested—a privileged man. Never yet did surly keeper drive me from a preserve; and often has the honest proprietor of some rural spot invited me, in passing, to kill his game, and share his dinner too.

But to return. The birds were wild, and flew high in the direction of the rising ground which lay to my left. I marked them into a thick copse, behind which rose a young plantation. Thither I bent my steps, and Ranger soon led me to the prey. I got a couple of shots, and brought down my birds. The remainder of the covey rose wildly round me, and scattering over the plantation, I quite lost their trace.

The day was young and warm. I walked towards a projection which commanded a charming view, and afforded at the same time shelter from the sun. Arrived at this little point, I flung myself under the shade of an acacia, my gun beside me, and Ranger not far off. It was one of the sweetest moments of my life. I seemed throned on the very summit of repose. Far beneath me spread the fertile plain of Bergerac, bounded on each side by chains of hills, and divided into nearly equal parts by the broad and placid river.—The richly-wooded landscape was sprinkled with cottages, and showed here and there the tall chimneys of a chateau, rising among the foliage; or the smoke from some humbler habitation, hid in a mass of chestnut trees, whose leaves protect the peasant from the heat, and whose fruit is his chief nourishment. Three or four small towns lay in sight; the one from which I had last started just visible in the distance.

It was vintage time, and numerous groups of grape-gatherers were scattered in the valleys, as happy as they were busy; for their joyous songs and bursts of merriment rose up from all sides on the pure and gentle breeze. A party of sportsmen ranged through the low grounds by the river, and an occasional shot came sharply on the highly rarefied air. The bark of an ill-trained dog, and the shout of the country people, when a partridge or a hare escaped their pursuers, were borne to my ear with a distinctness as perfect as if each group were close beside me. Many deeply-laden boats were floating down the river, gaily and unobstructed; the helmsmen unemployed, and the drowsy passengers carelessly leaning over the sides. One solitary barge, managed by a single boatman, was working its way against the current. Ungarnished by canvass or streamer, it formed a striking contrast to those which passed so rapidly by. The very breeze was hostile, and seemed to sport in the fluttering sails of the others, like those light and worthless parasites who fan the minions of good fortune. They swept in quick succession round a point that hid them from my view. Others came on, and were alike soon lost to me; but the single boat, working against both wind and tide, appeared, though ever moving, ever to stand still. I felt, that if I chose to indulge in similes, I had a parallel at hand: but I felt this without asperity or discontent, and seemed at the moment to rise above ill fate.

So still was the air, yet so clear, that the tolling of the several bells, as they chimed for prayer, or marked I know not how many hours, fell on my ear with sounds all equal. The hum of every individual insect seemed separate in the general buzz around me; and the very splash of the poor boatman's oar, as it fell upon the water, reverberated through the little grove where I reclined. It is hard to say how long I should have lain thus listless and delighted, had I not been more forcibly excited by the tone of a clarionette, touched by no mean performer, in one of the most distant outbound boats. The strain came wild and faintly up the river, and thrilled through my breast. It was scarcely like real music, and resembled rather those floating harmonies which sometimes lead the dreamer through mazes of enchantment. I seemed to wake from some such oft-enjoyed il-

lusion, and springing on my feet, I clasped my hands and raised them towards the skies. I felt as if the world was filled with joy and peace, and could not have been persuaded to the contrary by a host of cynical philosophers. Unconscious of my movements, I struck into the grove; but as I trod its little winding path, the train of my contemplations was disturbed. I thought I heard low sobs close by me. Impossible! said I; this must be imagination: my mind wanders, and while revelling in one extreme, its fancies warn me of the other. I stopped and listened, but hoped to hear no sound. It was however but too true. The tones of lamentation were repeated more distinctly; and, as I rustled through the trees towards the place from whence they came, I saw two female figures, clad in black, glide hastily from the spot where I strove to penetrate.

It seemed a vision of my overheated brain; and, without knowing what I did, I burst through the slight enclosure of myrtle trees and laurel. I found myself in a place that might well be called sacred. It was an arbor planted with flowering shrubs, each one of which might have attracted my attention, had not that been wholly absorbed by its principal and melancholy ornament. In the middle was raised a little grass-covered mound, surmounted by a small and simple marble urn. Two wreaths, of freshly culled and blooming flowers were hung around it. It bore no symbol of sorrow, but this short inscription in black letters: TO THE MEMORY OF OUR POOR SISTER.

Every thing looked as if just done. The sods were newly placed; the marble was unstained by even a drop of rain; the flowers had all their fragrance; and the whole scene breathed a fresh and holy solemnity. Wound up, as I had been, forgetting all that was of sorrow both of others and my own, the shock was extreme; and I cured the impetuosity which had led to an intrusion, which I thought little short of sacrilege.

The only atonement left me was to fly. I plunged again into the little wood, and hurrying onwards soon found an opening. I stepped upon a grass field, and felt lighter at every pace which bore me from the scene. Moving on, with eyes fixed upon the earth, and in a state of intense feeling, I had unconsciously taken the very route I would have left behind. I was proceeding directly towards the house, on the grounds of which I was thus trespassing. On looking up and perceiving this, I would have turned abruptly round, but was accosted by two young men, both in deep mourning, who had advanced to meet me. They were so near, that there was no retreating. I anticipated reproach, if not insult; and my astonishment was great indeed to meet a polite and even cordial salutation. "Sir, you are welcome," said one of the young men. "Come in, my father has been expecting your arrival." "Gentlemen," I replied, "you have mistaken for an expected visit an unpardonable intrusion. Your father knows me not, and I entreat you to attribute to ignorance the fault of which I have been guilty." "If you are a stranger, sir," returned the young man, "you have the greater claim upon our hospitality. Come in, I pray you. You have arrived at a sorrowful season; but the day of woe has almost passed by, and our friends, are now assembling to chase away its remaining hours." There was in the

manner of these young men something so pleasing, of mingled sadness and courtesy, and the whole scene presented something so novel, and I thought so interesting, that I accepted their entreaties. They asked me to go in as if they wished I should do so; and that was the surest method of overcoming my reluctance. As we walked towards the house, they explained to me that they had mistaken me for a stranger, whom their father expected; and they quite removed my scruples by assuring me, that many would be at their dinner that day, who were but little better known to the family than I was.

I was still, however, not quite myself. The strong excitement of my recent sensations had scarcely had time to subside. I begged of my hospitable conductors to enter before me, and mention that I was a foreigner, who had wandered without plan or method from a neighboring town; and, in the ardor of pursuit, had followed my game too far. With that kind and unembarrassed air so peculiar to the unsophisticated Frenchman, they acceded at once to my request, and consented that I should gratify myself by strolling about while they made my apology. I thus gained time to recover my composure, and to examine the place where I was.

The house was small and low. Its whitewashed walls, tiled roof, and green window-shutters, would have entitled it to the appellation of a neat cottage residence, had not its gigantic chimneys, disproportioned offices, and slovenly court-yard, presented a bar to the simplicity and comfort which that name denotes. Large, straggling out-houses seemed flung at random around. Implements of husbandry lay scattered on the ill-kept pavement. The annoyances of the farm-yard invaded the very windows of the habitation. Disorder, in short, seemed the governing principle of the place; and, while I gazed on the natural capabilities of its situation, I was grieved that so little had been done for it by man.

The ground lay beautifully sloping to the river at one side, and on the other hung the little platform. A precipitous bank towards the side I stood on shelved down to a glen of most romantic aspect. A rivulet ran gurgling at the bottom, and wound its way rapidly to join itself to the river. The foliage showed the softest variation of shades; and the sun, now sloping in the western half of heaven, flung a rich radiance on its mellow tints.

I could have almost relapsed into my former mood, had not the younger of my inviters approached me with a summons to the house. I flung aside at once my mantle of reflection; and, with a resolution to observe first and take time for thinking afterwards, I was ushered into the drawing-room. A number of persons, indeed a large company, was assembled. All were in black habits, except those who, I should have thought, required them most; for I immediately recognized the master and mistress of the mansion by their melancholy looks and the places they occupied among the surrounding visitors, although they neither of them wore mourning. My conductors presented me to their father, who approached me, and with a manner polished enough to mark the man of good breeding, but more sincere than courtier-like, he told me that I was welcome. He introduced me to his lady, who looked indeed wo-stricken, and spoke

not a word. The guests had also sorrow on their faces, but modified into different shapes and degrees of expression. I looked around me to discover the figures which had glided from me in the plantation but in vain. After a few general observations I fell behind a group who were conversing in under tones, and silently surveyed the scene into which I had so strangely dropped. The furniture of the apartment particularly attracted my notice; it was all that Parisian ingenuity could execute or good taste select. The window-curtains, of blue silk and embroidered muslin, tastefully festooned together, the richly-wrought carpet, profusion of looking-glass, and splendid chimney ornaments, assorted ill with the rustic air of the outside, and would have caused me much surprise, if they had not been in perfect keeping with that inconsistency, which is the most striking characteristic of every thing French. But in this chamber all seemed touched by a choice and delicate hand: elegance reigned throughout. No gaudy gilding destroyed the effect of the polished mahogany tables, or the piano-forte, which was placed at the upper end of the room. The harp was simple and classic in its form. The pictures which hung upon the walls were chaste and exquisite copies from Italian and Spanish masters. The portraits of the family, well executed and neatly framed, had also their places. The likenesses, of some I could vouch to be most faithful. Those of the father and mother were particularly striking. They seemed to have been painted in the early days of wedded enjoyment, for the costume might have been that of thirty-years before; and there was a smiling play of expression on the lip of each, which contrasted strongly with their present appearance.

The young men whom I had seen were schoolboys on the canvas, with curly heads and joyous faces, standing at full length, a large dog between them, and altogether a fine and social group. There was, besides, a full-grown youth in hussar uniform, with ardor in his glance and vigor in his manly form. Three lovely female half-length figures completed all of the set of portraits that was to be seen; but one, more than all others, excited my attention, from its being covered with a veil of black gauze. I would have willingly penetrated its concealment, for I was interested with every thing connected with this mysterious spot. I thought I could distinguish beneath its sombre covering the flowing drapery of a female form. I recollected the funeral urn, and my anxiety was almost agitation.

Some of the guests accosted me with the civility usual in this country of politeness. One gentleman, more than any other, pleased me by his address; and the familiar footing which he seemed to enjoy with the family made me suppose him to be a relative, and at all events, promised me a better chance of information than the affectionate, yet distant, respect which was visible in the manners of the rest. I attached myself particularly to him; and, in a short time, the announcement of dinner gave me an opportunity for the indulgence which I so much desired. We were ushered into the dining-room, where a table was prepared for upwards of twenty persons. I took care to remove far from me the lady of the house, beside whom the politeness of the family would have placed me. I

as the two young women silently enter and take their seats, while, shrinking from them, I secured a chair beside the gentleman whom I before mentioned.

We soon got into conversation; and, in answer to one of my remarks, thrown out purposely to lead him on, he informed me that the breakfast table that morning had been as amply supplied, and as fully attended, as that at which we were seated. I ventured to inquire the cause of this double display of hospitality, so unusual in one day. My companion informed me, in a whisper, that this was the custom on occasion of the first visits of condolence after the death of a relative. Some few days following the funeral were, he told me, allowed to elapse, that the sufferers might in solitude give indulgence to their grief. Then it became the duty of the neighborhood, even that part whose acquaintance was the slightest, to crowd at once, as if the whole fortitude of the mourners was to be forced into exertion on this single occasion. It was, he said, the usage all through France that mourning visits should be paid in mourning dress; but, in answer to my observation on that of our host and his lady, he added, that parents were not obliged by custom to conform to the color which marked the sorrow of the other connexions of the deceased. Exceptions were nevertheless seen where parents availed themselves of the privilege to bear the symbol of sorrow for their offspring's death; but *this* case offered no example of departure from the general rule.

"It was a daughter that has been lost?" asked I, my eyes involuntarily fixed on the crape-covered portraits. Before he could reply I saw that my gaze had caught the observation of a part of the family—it might have been that they heard the question. The lips of the young woman trembled, and their eyes swam full of tears: the father blushed a deep scarlet, and raised his glass to his head, which bent as if in shame. I might have both wept and blushed—the first for their sorrow, and the last for my own want of delicate reserve.

Determined to restrain myself, I turned the conversation, and joined in that which became general. Every one of the guests seemed anxious to draw the attention of the family from the contemplation of their grief; and the exertions of the latter were forced to the utmost to keep up the appearance of composure. But something seemed to lie upon their hearts still heavier than common wo: a deep sense of suffering, mixed with an uneasy support of it, was to be read on every face of the family. If the father for a moment relaxed in his endeavors to uphold the conversation, he started, at times, as if some inward reproach painfully forced him upon words for relief. If the young men now and then lapsed into thought, their fine countenances seemed to glow with flushings of imagined disgrace. The daughters scarcely ventured to speak, as if afraid of the emotion that rose higher than their words, and was continually struggling for utterance. The mother looked broken hearted. But, among them all, there was none of the dignity of virtuous sorrow; none of the resignation with which the wo-stricken mind looks back upon the purity of a lamented object; none of that calm condolence

with which we love to dwell, in the days of mourning, on the worth and loveliness of a departed friend; nor that melancholy garrulity which seems to waste away our grief in unavailing words. No, there was none of this—no remembrance upon which the weary heart seemed able to rest. All appeared a hopeless anguish, that wept in the bitterness of despondency.

The guests seemed actuated by a sympathy of agitated and obstructed suffering: their averted looks seemed to say, "We cannot offer consolation—for we dare not tell you that she lives in our esteem." Such was the construction that I put upon their manner: and I felt that the contagion of this compressed and overpowering affliction had seized upon me too. The efforts to keep up the conversation gradually died away. Subject after subject was attempted for its revival, but each one sunk in abortive efforts. The dishes went away almost untasted—the bottles stood unemptied. The very ceremony of assumed appetite was abandoned; and the whole party, as if with one accord, rose at length in silence and prepared to depart.

My neighbor at table had, in the hurried snatches of conversation which we mutually forced ourselves to support, informed me that he was a physician of the family, and an inhabitant of the town where I made my temporary sojourn. He proposed our walking there together. I was glad to embrace his offer; and, seeing that he wished to take an unobstructed adieu of his friends, I promised to loiter with-out until he joined me. The visitors began to take their leave. They cordially pressed the hands of each one of the deeply afflicted family. Looks of sorrowful energy were exchanged, but no sounds were uttered. I silently stole from the scene; for I felt that my presence, though at first perhaps considered a relief, had gradually become a restraint upon the suffering and sympathising circle.

When I got out of the house it was yet day. Dinner had been served about five o'clock, and nearly two dreary hours had elapsed since then. The sun was gone down and the crescent moon hung in the heavens, transparent and shadowy like a spirit of the skies. A rich glow suffused the west. The sun, in withdrawing his beams from the world, appeared to have shed a parting blessing on it, for every thing breathed a mellow complacency. The busy sounds of the morning were hushed. The call of the scattered coveys, or the chirping of the quails, was the only interruption to the stillness of the hour. My mind, however, was not at first in harmony with this repose of nature. The scene I had just left unfitted me for its enjoyment; and I thought that thunder and storm would have better suited my soul's temper. But in a little while the witchery of nature lulled to rest the gloomy spirits by which I was haunted. In proportion as my breast received the impressions of external loveliness, it seemed to swell with the desire of giving them vent. Heaven knows it was not a moment favorable to composition; and that, I trust, will be borne in mind by the reader of the following verses, scribbled with my pencil on the spot:

I.

How sweet to range a lonely wood
 When the mind is tuned to solitude,
 And summer's garish tints are fled,
 And the autumn leaves are falling—
 Where a rough cascade o'er its rocky bed
 With an angry sound is brawling :

II.

Or on some mountain's heath-clad side,
 As the sun yields up his blush of pride,
 And roseate beams o'er the landscape roll
 At the hour when day is closing ;
 And the eye and the soul o'er the beauteous whole
 Are in mutual calm reposing—

III.

When through the grove a plaintive breeze
 Bears a pure perfume from the trees,
 And we suck the wild thyme's luscious breath,
 And sigh for the flow'rets blighted
 Of some blooming wreath, where the hand of death
 Spared nought which our hearts delighted.

IV.

'Tis ever thus :—with ruthless grasp
 He comes to loosen the firm clasp
 Which folds those objects loved the best ;
 And then o'er each mourner hovers,
 Whose parched lips press'd, make the grave's cold breast
 Less chill than the form it covers.

I was just in the act of closing my tablets, when my new-formed acquaintance joined me, and we immediately set off arm in arm. Ranger following at a respectful distance. I quickly learned from my companion, that he was not only the physician, but also the confidential friend of the family we were leaving behind ; but he said that he considered it no breach of his double trust to give me some information respecting persons whose situation must have deeply excited my curiosity. On the contrary, he thought it more in their interest that he should make me acquainted with circumstances which were known to all the country, than leave me to hear them from mingled ignorance and exaggeration, or the gossip of a public table.

I requested him to give me the detail of all that was not secret in the sorrow of his friends ; and he immediately proceeded to do so, answering my inquiries with minuteness, and making me fully acquainted with their sad solitudes. It was three leagues to the town to which we were bound. We walked slowly in the mellow moonlight ; yet we had to loiter in the suburb, to allow my narrator to finish his story. When he had ended, and nothing more was to be elic-

ited from him, we parted. The moon was high in heaven when I heard the hollow sounds of his footsteps dying away in the distance, as he reached his residence. The beams of morning were crimsoning the east before I flung myself on the bed in my little inn, after a night of sensation more than commonly painful.

Many months have gone by since I listened to that sad recital, and time and absence have worn down much of the first impression it made upon me; but although the vividness of the detail is past, and the scene which I have attempted to describe has lost the freshness of its real existence, still, if I can but throw a faint portion of reality into the outline which I now sit down to draw I think enough will be done to impart some interest to it.

CHAPTER II.

The father of this unhappy family was a man of small but independent fortune. He farmed his own estate, which produced, probably, six hundred pounds a year, and on this income lived respectably and well; educating his children, entertaining his neighbors, and giving freely to the poor.

This is an enviable state of living to the man who can consent to be happy in retirement, and sighs not for the distinctions and disappointments of the world. Such a man was Mr. Le Vasseur; but even his choice was subject to its miseries. The Revolution had strongly excited the hopes of this gentleman, for he had none of the abuses of hereditary rank to uphold. He was of a respectable family, but not of distinguished birth; and he saw, like many another ardent spirit, the promise of terrestrial bliss in the overthrow of those distinctions which held a barrier to the advance of lowly worth. He had gone to Paris immediately after having married an amiable and accomplished woman, and he there expected the realization of his visions of universal good. A little while dissolved his delusive hope. The excesses of liberty appeared to him to offer no security even to a freeman; and still a firm republican in his heart, he withdrew from the agitated scene.

He retired to his little paternal inheritance; looked at the distant horrors of the times, and strove to keep the torrent beyond the pale of his own social circle. He had considerable influence in the neighborhood, from the respectability and steadiness of his conduct. A rigid virtue appeared to guide him in every thing; and if he sometimes erred, it was in judgment, not in heart. In the days of fury, he formed a happy contrast to the monsters who were abroad. He was a warm friend of liberty, but as firm as he was warm. He was

one of the many who could see the road between despotism and anarchy; but he was also one of the very few who had the strength and virtue to follow it. He loved freedom, and had drunk deeply in its delicious fountains, but not to intoxication; and he shrunk back from the debauchery of less guarded votaries. Such was the public man.

In private life he was consistent. He was an excellent husband and master; and as years grew upon him, he became a wisely affectionate father. But Le Vasseur was unfortunately tinctured with the infidelity of the times. He had followed in his early years the course of sophistry lectured on by some eminent professors, and was a rash disciple of a very unworthy philosophy. He thought man capable of perfection; and in following this phantom, he was forced to sacrifice many of the best, though perhaps the least imposing of human feelings.

He wished to form his character on the model of ancient example; but, like all who aim at forcing feeling from its natural channels, he was the frequent prey of very violent suffering. He would be stoical, but nature had made him tender. In his rigid view of right, he discarded mercy. Rejecting the pleadings of the heart, he placed his whole reliance upon reason; but as reason ripened, he became sensible of its unsoundness. When he saw this god of men's idolatry raised to what they were pleased to call its place, he saw that it had neither the power nor the privileges of divinity; that instead of men obeying its judgments, they were by no means unanimous in their interpretation of its laws: that while every mouth was an oracle, the attributes of the deity could never be explained:—and while he gazed upon the naked strumpet paraded through the streets, in triumphant personification of the immortal mind, he started back, and asked himself if it was a dream.

This cured him of his first disorder. He fled in disgust, and turned his thoughts towards the formation of a little mental digest, which was to be the essence of all that was wise and good. Plato, Aristotle, and many other speculators, lent their aid to his researches; but one lawgiver was rejected by involuntary impulse. He had been too long taught to discard Christianity, to be capable, if he wished, of looking there for precept. Through the absurdities with which it has been obscured by mortal frailty, he could not distinguish the still upright splendor of the principle itself; yet he suffered his children to grow up in its profession, because it was the re-established form. But the young people saw in his negative approval of its doctrines all the coldness of restraint; and Le Vasseur, perceiving that his example was robbing them of their best support against impetuous desires, found himself forced to a more rigid censorship; and he was imperceptibly degenerated into the tyrant over his free-born children. They felt this, and, though they feared him, they did not love him; because indulgence proceeding from well-regulated affection is the only foundation on which the regard of children can be built.

The young Le Vasseurs were highly favored by nature. Each particular temper showed in varying shades much that is bright and beautiful in the human disposition; and had these materials been

kept together by strong principle, perfection would be less a mockery than it is. But such moral cement was wanting. The boys would all have rushed to the cannon's mouth. Intrepidity ran current in their veins; yet the life-blood was not warmer than their tenderness of heart. They felt life to be possessed for the benefit of their country. They smiled in involuntary good-breeding, and bowed low if a stranger gave them salutation, or if an inferior came across their path; but if a pampered son of pride held up his countenance, and *claimed* respect, they felt a self-knit frown upon their brows, and an involuntary curl upon their lips.

Such was the fair side of the characters of these young men, and such I believe to be the better character of the country. But they had no integrity of soul on which they could rest in misfortune, and from which they might smile at fate. They had no settled principle of right, nor any well-organised notions of wrong. When they went astray, it seemed as if by rule. If they were correct, it was like chance. Fine feelings and good actions seemed to spring up spontaneously, and in their own despite; while looseness of life seemed worked into a settled code of conduct.

This wondrous inconsistency in individuals is to be met with every where; but it is in France alone that it appears as the national character. Other countries are strikingly moral, or the contrary; and a whole people is distinguished, as well as individuals, by the epithets good or bad: but those who have had any intercourse with the French mind, know how difficult it is to say which character predominates.

The convulsions of the Revolution threw every thing back into its original chaos. Mind was confounded with matter; and social institutions mingled in a common ruin with the elementary principles on which order had been raised. Conjugal faith became a mockery, and virgin coyness a reproach. Woman was sunk as low she had been in the worst state of Grecian society, under the sway of the Sophists; while the flagitious doctrines of that sect came now into practical reaction.

The influence of the government was a powerful engine in sapping the foundations of female chastity. The making marriage merely a civil obligation was striking a death-blow to its solemnity; and the protection afforded to public debauchery made private misconduct a matter of course. The looseness of their literature; the passion for classical illustration; the taste for statuary—in all its dignified indency—these, and a thousand other combining causes, broke through the barriers of natural modesty; and became the more irresistible, because breathing the intoxicating odours of elegance, and covered by the glittering yet flimsy veil of sentiment.

I am not endeavoring to palliate the general impurity, but I wish to establish some excuse for particular instances of error: not offering incense at the shrine of guilt, but striving to excite compassion for some of the victims of its worship. If I had not been able to do this, I should not have taken in hand the story of *Le Vasseur*. It was not, however, his fault, if the contagion reached his doors. He struggled hard, but it was against the stream; and he had no strength but what was barely enough to keep him from sinking.

In the whole neighborhood there were no young women so much admired as were his daughters, nor any who merited more to be so. They were beautiful, accomplished, and pleasing. They danced and sung better than most of their companions; and had other advantages, which the majority could not procure. Their father's wealth, for so his income was considered in their neighborhood, enabled him to procure for his children masters in music and drawing; and they profited as much as possible by this indulgence. He had himself much taste for the arts. His walls were covered with good pictures and engravings; and the chambers and gardens were furnished with casts from the best statues of antiquity. The subjects of all these ornaments were classical; and Le Vasseur loved to instil into his children notions of republican virtue through the medium of objects which might at once direct and cultivate their taste. The consequence was in some measure what he wished. They grew up in the warmth of republican principle; but they did not feel inclined to become themselves the parallels of all its effects. The sons almost defied the second Brutus, but they thought of the first with horror. The daughters sympathised with the heroic sternness of the Spartan mother, but they turned from Virginius as from a monster.

The hospitality of the house brought continual visitors, and amongst others, the officers of the cavalry regiments, stationed in the neighboring town. These officers were the greatest attraction which the neighborhood afforded for the young of both sexes. They danced and flirted in a style quite different, and rode and shot in a manner very superior to the rustic youth around. They were, of course, every where well received, and at some houses constant guests. During the late war in Spain, the regiments were continually changed; and this being one of the principal cavalry stations on the high road from Paris to Bayonne, troops of that description were in frequent movement from all sides of this part of France.

The two elder daughters of Le Vasseur had now grown up to be marriageable, and two other sisters were fast approaching to womanhood. But as they had all hitherto escaped any serious attachment, their father began to hope that they would fix their affections on some of the neighboring youth; who, though less captivating, had many more solid claims to their regard. But in this respect he was too sanguine; for the young people, though free from any dangerous impression, had sufficiently relished the refinement of their military acquaintances to have become extremely fastidious with respect to the others. The casual appearance of the few officers who now had leisure to cultivate the society of the neighborhood was rather discouraged by their hospitable but circumspect entertainer, who brought as much as possible his country friends around him. This change was little approved of by the younger members of the family; and the mother who lived in the happiness of her children, ventured occasionally to remonstrate with her more prudent husband, but in vain.

The eldest son was now seventeen; and it was determined, in compliance with his own wish, that he should get an appointment in one of the regiments ordered for Spain, and which contained some of

his favorite friends. The appointment was procured; and the young hero, after taking an affectionate leave of his family, set off for the frontiers. This was a day of great sadness to those who were left behind. The mother and sisters wept incessantly, and the two younger boys felt wretched at the better fortune of him who, by two or three years' seniority, had flung them so much into insignificance. They sighed for manhood, and the fine uniform of their brother, and built castles together for treasuring up the glory which was to come.

This event made some relaxation necessary to all; for even the father felt his stoical firmness somewhat shaken by the separation from his child. The young Vasseur was almost choked with tears; but, as he pressed his father's hand to his lips, he sobbed out assurances that he should not be an atom the worse soldier for that weakness—and he was not. On the contrary, he was the better soldier for it, because it softened down the courage of the animal into the as brave, but more considerate resolution of the man. He distinguished himself in many a bloody encounter by his boldness, and as often by his humanity. In the scenes of horror, which the Spanish war brought every day before his eyes, he only saw fresh reasons for the cultivation of merciful feelings, and left it to others to draw from them arguments for cruelty. But I am anticipating.

CHAPTER III.

Among the guests which the renewed conviviality of Le Vasseur's mansion brought together, was a young man named St. Croix, who having, like most others of his countrymen, embraced a military life, had just returned from Spain in consequence of a severe wound, and was then residing with his father, who was a neighboring proprietor of equal property and nearly similar principles with Le Vasseur and himself. This young man was at all times engaging and interesting, but particularly so at this period, from his having so recently quitted a country to which the attention of his friends was so particularly directed. The intimacy of his boyish days, before he had entered upon his worldly career, was now renewed, and to Le Vasseur's family party he became, in fact, an almost necessary appendage. He spent days together at the house. He was fond of shooting, and his mornings were chiefly occupied with the boys. He understood the general principles of agriculture, and passed an occasional hour with the father in viewing the management of his farm. He loved music, and was a proficient on more than one instrument. That ensured him the favor of the daughters; and he answered, without tiring, the questions relating to Spanish affairs which the mother unsparingly

put to him. I need not say that he was a favorite with her. In short, in politics, acquisitions, and manners, he was every thing that suited the particular tastes and united ideas of the whole circle. He was, notwithstanding all these external advantages, a libertine at heart. His ambition was unbounded. He longed for fame with the eagerness, and ardor of youth. His self-confidence was unlimited, and he had no doubt of his powers to command good fortune. He wished for wealth as the means of acquiring distinction, and despised his expected patrimony, as well as the retirement in which it was situated. He had been for some time attached to the suite of King Joseph at Madrid; had before then belonged to the body guard of the Emperor, and in that distinguished situation had been long stationed at Paris. He had imbibed all the vices, while perfecting himself in the refinements, of courts and capitals, and was, even there, a finished and notorious profligate.

In the circle of his native spot there was nothing of sufficient pomp to suit his inclinations; nothing highly seasoned enough to excite his satiated taste; but still sufficient to satisfy his grosser appetite. In *Le Vasseur's* family he saw a native elegance, of a kind totally different from the artful embellishments of fashionable life, but something that resembled it more than he saw elsewhere; and he gazed on beauty of a description as exquisite as the most vitiated voluptuary could desire. He remarked with astonishment the grace with which these country girls danced; the feeling with which they played and sung; the ease and even eloquence with which they spoke, and their freedom from vulgarisms and provincial accent. This was all certainly astonishing, inasmuch as it is uncommon; but who has not, some time or other, met with such accountable and striking instances of inherent good taste and self-formed good breeding?

The eldest of the daughters, whose name was *Eugenie*, attracted particularly *St. Croix's* regards, and seemed to value them the highest. She had all that brilliancy of beauty and showiness of person which the depravity of fashion prefers to more retiring charms. She was by far the best musician. She was of a gayer turn than *Agnes*; and the attractions of the youngest two were not yet sufficiently developed to enter into the competition.

The flow of *Eugenie's* spirits had no bounds; and her tongue kept pace with the rapidity of her thoughts. She talked incessantly and generally well; but she frequently got beyond her depth, and boldly entered into discussions on the most profound subjects with a levity which showed her disrespect as well as incapacity. *Agnes* thought on these matters pretty nearly as did her sister, but she talked less about them. She never scoffed at religion, and felt there was something holy in even its superstitions, and was sometimes almost disposed to regret that she could not enter into its enthusiasm. The mother delighted in *Eugenie's* talents and their display; but they caused the father many an anxious hour. He would have given worlds to have seen her well married: and he thought that such a man as *St. Croix* was exactly suited for her husband. With this view he encouraged the intimacy that was going on; and he felt

that for Agnes he had no need of uneasiness. There was something in the reflective complacency of even her happiest moments which gave him surety for her. She had a heart fully as susceptible as her sister's, but more regulated; and although her feelings seemed to spring from the same source, they ran in quite a different channel. I cannot pursue the parallel further. The sequel of what I have to relate will illustrate their characters better than description.

For some months matters went on most smoothly with the family; continual parties of pleasure, in the rural scenes around, diversified their domestic enjoyments. Frequent letters from the army gave assurance of the safety and good conduct of the young soldier. His place at home had been almost completely supplied by St. Croix.—The father and mother were delighted by the prospect of having him really for their son, and the younger girls looked on him quite as a brother. The boys, too, considered him completely as such; and as for Eugenie, she gave herself up entirely to love. All that warmth of impassioned feeling which had so long been prisoned in her breast now rushed from its concealment with irresistible force; and she looked, and spoke, and sung more like some visionary being of the fancy than anything real with which mortal sympathies have connexion.

St. Croix seemed equally ardent and impassioned, but his demeanour wanted that stamp of self-delight with which his lovely mistress seemed imprinted: towards her he was all that affection could create, but with himself he seemed but ill at rest. His appearance wore a look of mingled agitation and enchantment and at the times when he was the happiest he seemed the most unhappy. In fact, he was undergoing the severest struggle that the mind of a profligate, yet amorous, man could suffer: he was a constant prey to the contest of ambition with desire. He really loved Eugenie with all the force of the most violent passion, but he still panted after fame with the breathless ardour of devotion. To marry Eugenie would have for ever thrown him back from the object of his primary pursuit: to lose her would have rendered him incapable of its enjoyment. The distinction which he looked to was only to be procured by means of a high alliance—a union with Eugenie would sink him at once into insignificance. He turned in every way his prospects and position; viewed, in all their bearings, the arguments for and against: but was long ere he forced himself to decide on the enjoyment of one ruling passion without the sacrifice of the other.

He was not without a portion of those better feelings which I am fond of believing to belong more or less to all his countrymen; those genuine sentiments of natural good, which, even when they fall before the power of vice, cast a redeeming lustre on their possessors, and too often brighten the sombre shades of guilt. He hesitated long before he resolved on the seduction of Eugenie. I can scarcely, however, use that word. He had but little difficulty on her part to overcome.

She flung herself without hesitation into the open arms of her paramour, and in his ardour found all that she required of consolation. He never talked of marriage, and she cared little on that

point. She had no dread of the grief which she was preparing for her mother, although loving her tenderly; nor of the shame she was bringing on her brothers; nor the danger into which she was thus guiding her sisters. She was quite convinced of her power to remove from all of them every feeling of temporary resentment; and she relied so strongly on the fidelity of St Croix, that she was even ready to sacrifice them all, should they oppose themselves to a connexion which she felt was to endure for ever. But she sometimes shuddered at the anticipation of her father's severity. From this fear she, however, strove to shelter herself by the hope of being able to conceal her secret; and, if even discovered, she had volumes of reproach to heap upon him in return for the indulgence which led to her error.

We may believe that in this state of feeling she had hours of much uneasiness. She had so, but they were fleeting. Her sorrow was not founded on remorse; and it is that alone which makes sorrow hopeless. She had no self-reproaches—for to herself she could justify what she had done by the arguments of many of her favorite authors, and the example of some of her friends.

But Le Vasseur could not coincide with those who maintained that females, whose example has once tended to loosen the bonds of society, should be allowed an opportunity of uniting them again, beyond the sphere of their own families, and the limited circle of their own particular friends. In consistency with his opposition to the principle, he was obliged to discountenance its followers; and if he failed in his efforts to instil strict notions of right into the minds of his children, he at least kept from them the practical instances of impurity. No female of suspected virtue was admitted to his house; and if his daughters occasionally saw some of their tainted companions, it was by stealth.

While this narrowed the round of their social intercourse, it did not better themselves. The system of outer toleration was too general to be affected by the rigid exclusion from one house, although one of most influence in the country; and the family of Le Vasseur, as well as his neighbors, unanimously pronounced him too strict. I have said little of the character of his wife, because little was to be said on the subject. She was a woman of great amiability, of placid temper, and engaging manners; who on all occasions submitted to others; who thought opposition produced only unhappiness; who indulged the foibles of her offspring, from fear of spoiling their tempers, and who concealed their faults from their father in the dread of fretting him. Living, however, but for the well-being of her children and the will of her husband, she thought the first should be as dependent on the latter as she was herself; and if she wept, in the sequel over her daughter's misfortune, it was more because it brought down her husband's anger than from any idea of innate impropriety, or any notion that her own weakness could be imagined to have caused the calamity.

Such was the character of Madame Le Vasseur, and such were the two extremes through which her children had to steer; paternal austerities and motherly indulgence, totally incapable of association;

and the one ever counteracting the good, and adding to the evil effects of the other. I feel that I am involuntarily urging arguments of extenuation for the immediate object of my censure. It is possible that I am; but as more morals than one are mixed together in my tale, I must only hope that there are the more chances for its example being effective.

Time, which in all cases flies, alas! too rapidly, is apparently accelerated in speed by every species of enjoyment, but by none so much as by that which is criminal.

When Eugenie looked back on four months from the commencement of her intercourse, she was amazed. It seemed incredible. The time was gone, and like a blank. No record was written of thoughts, feelings, or actions. All had been a wild and uncontrollable flow of spirits, which left no vestige of its course. She remembered that she had been happy; and a wild and negligent air was visible in all she said or did.

St. Croix was ever with her, but did not partake of this abandonment. He was almost as impassioned as she was, but he was not so thorough a voluptuary. She thought but of him—he but of himself. Her infatuation must have led to inevitable discovery, had not the lover possessed a more limited share of susceptibility. His whole attention was turned to prevent the betrayal of their secret, by the very object to whom discovery would have been most fatal.

Le Vasseur observed Eugenie's demeanor, and saw it with pleasure. He had made virtue too much his study to have had leisure for the contemplation of vice; and, if he had been called upon to draw an inference from his daughter's manners, he would have stated it to be the obviousness of her purity.

He often wondered at the agitated expression of St. Croix's countenance; but he saw him deeply enamoured of Eugenie, and believed that no obstacle could interpose a barrier against their union. He knew the sentiments of St. Croix's father to be highly favorable to it, and he felt that he himself was not a man to be trifled with; and that no alternative remained for him who had gone so far.

Madame Le Vasseur was a passive spectator of the progress of things. She saw that her husband was approving and her daughter happy. The brothers regretted the attachment, which so engrossed St. Croix as to take him entirely away from a participation in their sports; and the younger girls looked on in silence, and thought the lovers very extravagant. But Agnes had a deeper interest in the affair—for she was throughout her sister's confidant. How the mind silently sickens at this fact, and how naturally it turns from the instance of particular ill to the execration of the system in which it had its source! What a mass of public turpitude must have vitiated the natural delicacy of the female mind before such a depository as a sister's bosom could be the chosen hiding place of such a secret; a bosom could be found to accept the trust!

Agnes, was, however, her sister's confidant; and the trust could not have been reposed in a safer breast. Her every effort was exerted in devising plans for the prevention of discovery, and for per-

suading St. Croix into the necessity of his marrying Eugenie. She had the penetration to discover that he had no idea of such a step; and she saw enough of his character to convince her that no common motive would be sufficient to urge him to it. But she perceived through his libertinism a glimmering light of humanity and honour, and a ruling spirit of chivalrous feeling, which she hoped to bring into effective action against self-interest and ambition. She felt that with Eugenie it was premature to enter on a topic of such material texture. She saw in her romantic flightiness no basis on which such argument could rest; and she let her run on in the ungovernableness of her delusion, until the moment when necessity should speak more forcibly than prudence or self-interest.

That moment had now arrived—for the infatuated Eugenie began to perceive that proofs of her intercourse would soon be furnished to the eye of every observer. Her first flash of feeling was that of rapture at the thought of becoming a mother; and her ecstasy burst upon St. Croix in the most impassioned strain of eloquent endearment. In offering him the promise of this pledge, her only fear was that excess of delight would be too much for his self-command. How blank and desolate was her heart when his involuntary exclamation of horror struck upon her ear! He was almost petrified, and lost all control. He poured out the bitterness of his angry regret in a flood of reproaches on his unfortunate associate; and he saw her sink insensible on the floor of the garden arbour, and rushed from it in the violence of his rage without a feeling for mother or for child.

Agnes met him in this mood; and he abruptly told her the secret which her sister had revealed. She saw in his face the working of his soul; but she did not for an instant lose her presence of mind, nor evince any appearance of surprise. In fact, she had for some time expected this communication, but was not astonished that the overflow of Eugenie's joy should have first betrayed itself to him who was so strictly joined with her in community of interest.

Agnes with all her usual composure, and somewhat of her father's sternness, quietly replied to the passionate expression of St. Croix's emotion. "Then no time is to be lost: you must marry her without the least delay!" "Marry her!" exclaimed the criminal. "Madness! Never, never! She dreams not of such ruin." "Ruin! To whom?" "To me; eternal ruin. What! dash my hopes of everlasting fame to earth, and prostrate the golden glories of ambition at the feet of her who has led me to this connexion!—Never!" "St. Croix," replied Agnes, "I have no hopes of forcing you to your duty through any medium but your own heart: I shall not even combat the momentary injustice which would fling upon my unhappy sister reproach or recrimination. If she *had* even been your tempter, you have bound your destiny to hers; and, were you even joined in fellowship with a fiend, the bonds would be eternal that were so cemented." She walked from him calmly towards the arbour. He spoke not a word, but remained fixedly gazing on her, with a sort of awful admiration, till he saw her enter the alley which led her to Eugenie; and, as he lost sight of her graceful figure, he felt as if lightened of a spell that chained him to the spot. He hurried away

in a state of distracted feeling, but the last words of Agnes seemed still ringing in his ears.

He rushed from the garden by an unfrequented path, and was seen for above an hour pacing the neighboring vineyard with agitated steps. An hour of deep reflection was nothing uncommon to him; but an hour of hard-contested struggle between ambition and honor was novel to his breast; for in general they acted in concert—at least, according to his notions. In this instance, however, he could not blind himself to their opposition; for his feelings echoed back their violent and incessant clashing. In defence of the suggestions which bade him abandon Eugenie he had a host of ready arguments; the most leading of which was his never having promised her marriage. Then rushed up the doubt, if he ought not to have done so. Her promptness to meet his advances was at least the result of unbounded confidence; and he could not conceal from himself, that, had she made conditions, she might have had any that she chose. In short, his perturbation was extreme, and he suffered keenly during this hour of mental strife; but every pause of thought, and often in the midst of thought's most violent paroxysms, the words of Agnes returned with all their air of supernatural and inspired delivery:—"Had you even joined in fellowship with a fiend, the bonds would be eternal that were so cemented." Whether it was the influence of this prophetic ejaculation, or the workings of natural good feeling, even St. Croix himself could never distinguish; but a magical and momentaneous impulse seemed to strike him with the conviction, that a man involved in such a connexion as his was bound to abide the fate of his associate, though fortune, fame, or life was the inevitable sacrifice. His agitation ended in this fixed belief, and in a determination to act up to its principle: but, while we may suppose him in all the ferment of conflicting feelings, and before his determination was formed, we must turn awhile to her who suffered under the consequences of his intemperate treatment.

CHAPTER IV.

When Agnes entered the bower, she found the wretched Eugenie stretched senseless on the ground. Shocked as she was, she uttered no scream, nor did she lose in useless lamentation the moments which were so precious for the recovery of the sufferer. She flew to the little brook which flowed though the garden, and the readiness of reflection supplied her with a resource which the want of common conveniences would have rendered unattainable to a mind of less self-command. She steeped her handkerchief in the stream, and ran

back with it to the bower. She applied the plentiful moisture to her sister's brow, and had soon the happiness to see her revive. 'I must not dwell on the distressing portrait which the poor victim presented; nor could I heighten by description the pain of every sensitive heart which imagines her wretchedness. The first expression of her recovered reason was a piercing shriek on perceiving her sister where her inhuman lover had so lately stood. The memory of all that had passed rushed upon her brain; and, with long-redoubled cries, she called upon the father of her child. Agnes endeavored to pacify her, but in vain. She would not be restrained; and the sounds of her anguished voice soon reached the house, and pierced even the recesses of her father's study.

The first persons of the family who reached the spot were her two brothers, who had been preparing for their morning sports, and, armed with their guns, they rushed towards the bower. Their wild inquiries were quickly answered by the frantic confessions of Eugenie. Her overloaded heart seemed relieved by every burst of agonised reproach, heaped as unsparingly upon herself as on the cause of her suffering. Agnes would have interposed between the rash avowal of Eugenie and the fiery agitation of the youthful listeners. Her most judicious efforts were, however, uselessly exerted; for the exclamations of self-conviction were again and again repeated, and St. Croix as often accused of brutal villany. The brothers, thus wrought upon, gave loose to their mutual fury. With one glance of indignant sympathy flung upon their sister, they rushed through the shrubbery, and were lost to the imploring gaze of Agnes, who, still kneeling on the ground, supported in her arms the victim of violence and exhaustion.

The servants and laborers now came in, and next the mother. To each one was the fatal secret openly developed; but in the contemplation of him who followed them I pass over the effect produced on more common observers. Le Vasseur was the last who reached the arbor. The shrieks which had roused him from his retirement came more faintly repeated as he approached the spot; but the bewailing accents of his daughter forcibly caught his attention. The sounds of grief seldom proceeded from the voice of Eugenie. The penetrating mind of Le Vasseur quickly seized upon the truth. As he listened, the blood rushed upwards from his heart, and a suffocating impression of agony and anger for an instant seemed to threaten life itself. His eyes swam, and had he not laid hold of a projecting tree, he felt that he must have fallen to the earth. It was some moments before he could recover himself sufficiently to move; and during this interval he heard enough, in the continued strain of self-accusation from within, to remove all shade of doubt, and to arouse his entire energies.

He entered the arbor. The paleness of united rage and sorrow overspread his face. He tottered feebly from the violence of his emotion, and large drops stood on his sternly-furrowed brow. The servants and laborers made way as he approached. His wife shrunk back, and Agnes sunk her head upon the bosom which she had been so long supporting. Eugenie alone seemed spell-bound by her fath-

er's gaze. Her eyes wildly glared upon him as he came slowly towards her, with uplifted hands clasped above his head. As he advanced he spoke not, but fixed his looks upon her. His eyes for a moment closed, his brows were knit more rigidly, his lips compressed together with a sterner energy, his hands trembled on high; and then, as if this short but fearful preparation had given his mind full strength, he spoke: "Listen, daughter of infamy! listen to the curse of him who disowns you for his child. I curse you in the moment of your anguish, and I pray that it may last with your life. I drive you from my heart and my home, and implore the heavens, that eternal misery may light upon your desolate path!"

This was uttered in a voice of terrible energy; and when the listening group ventured again to look up, the father was seen hurrying from the bower, and the object of his malediction was once more senseless on the ground.

Agnes was the first to recover from the shock which the horrid fervor of her father had given to all. Her mother was flooded in tears, but *she* could not weep. The springs of feeling seemed congealed within her breast, and an icy hardness pressing on her heart. She felt at the moment that nothing in nature was half so terrible as a FATHER'S CURSE; and shuddered at the reflection that it was mere chance which had spared her, and drew it down upon her sister. But there was no time for the indulgence of thought: she saw that the life of Eugenie was at stake; and in resolute, but, she felt, in right defiance of her father's sentence, she ordered the people to bear her sister to the house. Madame Le Vasseur gave no sign of approval or disapprobation. The servants were always accustomed to regard the words of Agnes as law; and humanity joined at present in stimulating to the disobedience of an unnatural decree. They therefore carried the senseless sufferer along. As they passed towards the house, Le Vasseur was seen standing in a by-path, with one hand clenched in involuntary agitation, and the other firmly placed upon his forehead, as if to control the angry spirit that seemed throbbing in his brain. He looked upon the melancholy procession unmoved, and saw it enter the house. The followers were all delighted at this tacit approval on the part of the father; but Agnes trembled anew as she gazed on the spectacle of his silent apathy.

Eugenie was borne to her own chamber, and placed before an open window. The repeated applications usual on such occasions brought her once more to herself. She had begun to revive, and was weeping bitterly, surrounded by her mother and sisters, when a new object of agitation and terror came to add to the calamities of this momentous day. A shot was heard from the vineyard. It came like the sound of fate to the ready anticipation of Eugenie. Agnes, too, felt an instinctive apprehension at a report so common and at other times so harmless; but her whole attention was turned to tranquilize her, whose destiny, perhaps, hung upon the intelligence of the next moment.

While the sisters thus looked out in the violence of their emotion, a woful spectacle presented itself. The brothers were seen issuing from the vineyard, bearing between them the bleeding body

of St. Croix. Eugenie started from her seat, and in the frenzy of excitement she rushed from the house, followed by the scarcely less shocked spectators. She quickly met the object of her search; and before prevention could interfere, she flung herself upon her bleeding lover, accusing herself as the cause of his murder, and heaping execrations on the brothers, whose hands she intuitively concluded to have dealt the fatal blow. St. Croix was not, however, dead, but the life-blood was gushing fast away; and here again the presence of mind of Agnes was most strikingly displayed. She despatched messengers in two or three directions, in search of surgical aid; staunched the dreadful wound which had lacerated the breast of St. Croix, and had him quietly placed in the bed which he had so long occupied in the vigorous repose of health. He had fainted from pain and loss of blood, and was as insensible to the anguish of the one sister as to the wisdom of the other. Eugenie, the miserable Eugenie, could no longer support this terrible excitement. She saw her lover laid upon his bed—his eyes were closed, she thought, for ever—and, sinking under the overwhelming pressure of her anguish, she was carried again to her chamber in the raging violence of a fever.

The causes which led to the immediate situation of St. Croix are quickly told. We left him pondering on the part which he was to pursue; but I had anticipated his decision of giving to Eugenie the only reparation for his injurious and unjust demeanor, by joining himself to her for ever. He was returning towards the garden, with his heart full of this resolve, and bursting with anxiety to utter it, when he was met and abruptly accosted by the brothers, who had sought him all round the farm. Their young breasts burned and their brains were almost maddened by the sorrowful picture on which they had just gazed. The elder of the two approached St. Croix, and fiercely accosted him: "Are you a man? I know you to be a villain. Here! take this gun (presenting him that belonging to his brother.) Place yourself on your guard—stand firm, for you have but a moment to live."

"My dear Adolphe."

"What! villain, does your coward heart fail you?"

That was enough. St. Croix was as impetuous as his young antagonist. The magic of one word had turned his blood to flame. He took the fowling-piece, and placed himself in the attitude to fire. Adolphe, at twenty paces from him, did the same. The younger brother was to give the signal; but ere he could pronounce it, St. Croix's better feelings once more prevailed, and the gun remained in his hands uncocked. The signal to fire was given, and Adolphe obeyed it too well. Almost the whole charge of small shot entered the breast of St. Croix, who was sensible to nothing farther, until roused by the painful operation of the surgeons, endeavoring to extract the shot.

The youthful instruments of his suffering were deeply affected. They felt that shrinking from themselves experienced by every humane man who has the misfortune to shed blood, even in an honest cause. They applied to their father for consolation, but he had none

to give them: he had more need of it than they. The daughter that he loved—the friend so highly valued—both in such imminent danger of death. His paternal tenderness abused—his confidence betrayed—his offended pride—his wounded honor—all that could be imagined of suffering to such a man, was accumulated in one dreadful storm, the suddenness of which was an aggravation of every individual horror. He stood, indeed, in want of consolation; and, most of all, of that consolation which he could not command. It was religion that he needed, to bear him up in this hour of trial. Philosophy and virtue were unavailing; and he exhibited a melancholy instance of strength of mind sinking under the more powerful sway of force of feeling. He had roused all his faculties to action when he pronounced the terrible curse upon his daughter; but such a display of desperation was not the natural man. It was the effort of that artificial character which he had for years been struggling to make his own. It was sufficient for the moment, but no more. While the anathema yet quivered on his lip, he saw a portion of its command infringed, yet he saw this violation without power to control its progress; and after reaching the farthest stretch of stoical exertion, he sunk down under all the weakness of humanity.

I cannot depict the state of his mind during the days which elapsed before St. Croix and Eugenie were declared out of danger. He passed this time in frequent and violent struggles as to the course he should pursue. His natural feelings told him to forgive his daughter, in compassion for her sufferings, while his assumed disposition urged him to persist in casting her off for ever. The contest ended as might be expected, when nature is the antagonist of art.—The victory was on the side of clemency, and the good sense of Le Vasseur told him that he was right.

St. Croix had repeatedly, during his illness, sent assurances to Le Vasseur that his only hope for life was, that he might repair his injury to Eugenie, and make her happy. His own father was the negotiator between them, and the whole neighborhood joined their solicitations for mercy to those so strongly urged by the immediate members of the two suffering families. Le Vasseur was glad of so plausible an excuse, and he strove to make a dignified merit of yielding to their prayers what every body saw that his heart was yearning to grant.

His first interview with St. Croix was very interesting, but that with his daughter was affecting in the extreme. During the delirium of her fever, she had repeatedly fancied that she saw her father, and in her frequent ravings had called on his name.—She sometimes implored, and sometimes defied him. Heaped on him, at one moment, the most endearing appellations; at another, loaded him with epithets of fearful execration.—These heart-rending wanderings sunk deep into the mind of Agnes, and she fervently hoped, again and again, that she might die before such a state as that should be her lot.

At length the crisis of Eugenie's fever passed by, and, whether from the natural force of her constitution, and the more probable cause that she had not been worn down by the over-done severity

of medical aid, she seemed to have lost but little of her former strength, and a few days made a rapid change for the better in her appearance. Still, though she had not the baggard and emaciated look which a fever patient in England carries for weeks after his recovery, she was but the shadow of her former loveliness. She looked pale and exhausted, and her mind seemed to be yet more worn down than her body. She believed her lover to be dead, and the physicians thought it dangerous for awhile to undeceive her. With her recovered reason she caught the recollection of St. Croix, and the melancholy hope of joining him in the grave where she believed him buried. She refused, under different pretences, the nourishment necessary for life itself, and under those circumstances it became absolutely requisite, even at the risk of a relapse, to inform her of the only truth that could induce her to live.

For the performance of this task her father was considered the best qualified; and he consented to see her for the purpose of assuring her of his forgiveness, and of communicating the intelligence which was to give his pardon the most effectual value. Eugenie ardently expected his first interview; for, feeling that she could not live, she was miserable at leaving the world without her father's blessing pronounced from his own lips. Her mother and Agnes had repeatedly told her of his forgiveness, but she was not satisfied with this. She prayed that she might be allowed to see him, and was so much agitated by the delays insisted on by the physicians, that they at length considered the emotions to be looked for from the meeting were less to be apprehended than the effects of her protracted anxiety.

The hour being at length fixed for the visit, the father announced his readiness to proceed to her chamber, and the time approached.—She received the announcement with composed delight, and seemed calmly prepared for the arduous scene; but in a little she betrayed symptoms of uneasy apprehension and occasional wanderings of thought and expression. A feverish flushing stole over her pallid cheeks, and she was seen occasionally to turn her eyes towards the door with a wildness of gaze that was thought symptomatic of a relapse. At length her state of nervous irritability became so oppressive, that she begged that her father might not see her that day.—Her mother was commissioned to be the bearer of this wish; but, ere she had left the chamber a minute, Agnes was despatched by the capricious sufferer to recal the postponement, and request his presence. He accordingly, in no slight emotion, prepared to attend the summons, but had not reached her chamber door, accompanied by his wife and Agnes, when one of the younger sisters once more forbade his entrance. As they entered his chamber he retired, and had but just again composed himself to his study, when a renewed entreaty from the agitated invalid was borne by the remaining sister, cancelling the last prohibition, and soliciting his immediate presence.

Le Vasseur was almost overpowered by these proofs of the misery of his unhappy child. If one lurking feeling of resentment still lingered in his bosom, it was utterly erased by the force of her affliction; and in moving once more, in tacit obedience to her call, he almost felt himself unequal to the trying scene. He, however, sum-

moned up all his fortitude, and reached her chamber door. He here paused, and half hoped that some renewal of Eugenie's apprehensions might come to prevent the exposure of his own. He shook the handle of the door with noise sufficient to announce his approach, but no voice pronounced the wished for opposition to his entrance. He next coughed aloud, knowing that by that he should be recognized. All was, however, still. He then desired his daughter, who accompanied him, to go softly in, and see if Eugenie did not sleep, and, as she entered, he leant forward, in the hope of catching the heavy breathing which heralds the momentary repose of illness. But his wife appeared and beckoned him in. He had no alternative; he could not shrink back, and he made a final effort to recover his firmness. His wonted severity of aspect and utterance was now forgotten, and in this moment of trial, the man completely triumphed over the philosopher.

Eugenie heard him enter, but she saw him not. She did not venture to look up. A film seemed spread before her eyes. She trembled in every limb. Her heart leaped with violence, and fancy pictured her father with the countenance, and in the attitude, in which she had last gazed on him. The appalling recollection rushed upon her mind, and vibrated in terror through her feeble frame. She buried her head beneath the bed-covering, and exclaimed aloud; that she could not, dared not, look upon him. He in a tremulous voice pronounced her name. "Eugenie, my child!" were the only words that he could utter; but the tone in which he spoke them was like magic to the daughter's feelings—so plaintive, so expressive, so unlike his usual firm enunciation—she felt lightened of a load of fear; and, with an electric impulse of delight, she started up and saw her father. Could it be him? she involuntarily asked herself—sunk on one knee beside the bed—his brow unbent—his lips quivering—his voice choked with sobs, and his eyes streaming with tears! She uttered a cry of mingled rapture and amazement, and flung herself into the arms which opened wide to fold her to parent's heart.

* * * * *

CHAPTER V

Two years from this day saw France relieved from war, and the family of Le Vasseur once more at peace and happy. Eugenie, the married mother of two beautiful children, living in her own home; her eldest brother returned from Spain, covered with honorable wounds and well earned fame; the two younger boys grown up to

gallant youths; the younger sisters lovely and accomplished; and Agnes possessed of the only want of her heart—a lover.

The nuptials of Eugene and St. Croix, which immediately followed his convalescence, were a festival of general joy to all within the circle of the family acquaintance. There was something so interesting, so romantic, so *sentimental*, in the adventure, that the most powerful sympathy was excited in behalf of the united lovers.

The wedding festivities were gay and graceful. Music ushered in the morning, and dancing closed the day. Crowds of admiring friends attended the young couple to the Marie* and the church; for the ceremonies of religion added their sanction to the civil contract required by the law. Many a flower was ravished from its stem to strew the path of the bridal party; and the quickly fading bloom of the bouquets seemed an appropriate warning to the chief personage of the procession. She, the thoughtless Eugene, moved on, blithe and blushing, not from modesty but joy. Her look resembled not the fluctuations of a bridal countenance which I once gazed on. There the mingled emotions of virgin agitation at one moment flushed the cheek with crimson, the next called back the burning tide to swell the maiden's heart, and leave her visage colorless:—bringing to my remembrance the varying beauties which I had seen in the passes of a mountain chain, when some graceful peak, clothed in heaven's whitest snow, blushed for an instant in the roseate light of a refracted sun-beam, and then, as the slant ray verged down the hill, relapsed into its hue of mild yet dazzling parity.

But the triumphant glance of Eugenie spoke only a consciousness of her victory over ill-fortune. Snatched from the threshold of the grave, she gained no salutary advantage from her escape, but turned back upon the world with redoubled relish for its most worthless vanities. She thought not of the past, nor looked forward to what was to come; ont clung to the present enjoyment, as buoyant as the light-winged hours which were fleeting so fast and sunny over her span of life. St. Croix supported her on his arm, and his pallid brow showed the occasional furrow traced by some fitting recollection. He behaved however well, and wore a firm if not an enraptured demeanor. Every member of the Le Vasseur family attended. The affectionate mother wept floods of joyous tears. The sisters indulged freely in her happiness. The sons showed a frank and manly satisfaction, and Le Vasseur himself bore up in unison with the general appearance of content.

St. Croix and his wife removed immediately to the house of his father, whose widowed solitude was cheered by such a happy accession to his domestic enjoyments. His comfort was however of short duration; for the perturbation of mind which had so violently acted upon a feeble constitution, during the late trying circumstances brought him to the grave in less than a year after the marriage of his son. St. Croix became thus master of his property, and having neither brother nor sister, he was very well in the world; and, with the

*The town-house.

peculiar ease of French philosophy, he flung off every notion of his former views, renounced his shadowy hopes of fame, and settling down into the farmer of his own ground, gave himself up to those rural occupations for which his neighborhood was so well adapted.

Eugenie, in her new capacity of mistress of a family, had an ample field for the display of her natural character. The warmth of her heart had now free channels into which it could run; and her wilder feelings being bounded by a settled object, she was in less danger of suffering from their excess. Her old acquaintances flocked round her with undiminished fondness, and no notion of disrespect attached itself to the memory of her misconduct.

Eugenie, however, in the midst of her apparent enjoyments, had one subject of severe regret, sufficient to chill the warmest of her pleasures; and in the bloom of all her joys there was a canker at her heart. Although not at all sunk in her own esteem, or her husband's, or her mother's, or her friends', she saw clearly that she had for ever lost her father's. She felt bitterly his evidently uncontrollable dislike. He appeared to shun her society even at his own house; and she naturally felt a disinclination to meet him at hers. In short, there was but little intercourse between them; but the younger branches of the family often saw each other.

Le Vasseur, having lost in a great measure his fondness for his eldest daughter, seemed to turn with a tenfold affection to Agnes. She had always been his favorite child, and resembled him more than any of the others in all the better parts of his character. She was drawn still closer to him by his feelings towards her sister, for she pitied him, knowing that he felt himself disgraced as well as afflicted; and though differing widely with him on the main point of Eugenie's guilt, she took care not to shock him by any avowal of her opinion on a subject upon which his was so decided. While lavishing every kindness that he had the means of bestowing to meet each want and wish of Agnes, decorating his house anew according to her taste, and forgetting the austerity of his character in the overflowing of his indulgence, Le Vasseur still neglected no opportunity of recurring with the whole weight of his reasoning to the subject which gave rise to his present conduct. He was evidently dissatisfied with the part he had acted on that occasion. He saw that he had lost the finest opportunity of his life for leaving behind him the character of that unbending and implacable virtue, to establish which his whole life had been devoted. He felt himself little in comparison to what he had been; degraded in the eyes of those who had looked upon him as a paragon of republican firmness; and he was conscious that he had descended from the pedestal of his pride to mingle in the common ranks of every-day men.

The mortification which this caused him was much more powerful than any counterbalancing pleasure founded on the applause which he had obtained. He had seen so much evil produced in the world by the plastic characters of those who are thought the best, that he would have rather been an object of fear than of affection; and, unsatisfied at the late example of his weakness, he almost wished, at times, for an opportunity of redeeming his character by giving a proof of his severity.

But these last were fitting and unsettled thoughts: in his better moments he had none of them. They were the wayward errings of his artificial mind: his natural feelings revolted from them; and he was even sometimes, in the fullness of his heart, disposed to think that he had rather relieved his reputation from the stain of harshness than loaded it with the stigma of unsteadiness. "If however," he used to exclaim, "if another instance should occur!" But he never could finish the sentence, nor allow his thoughts to dwell on the anticipation.

If Le Vasseur wished to have procured a husband for Eugenie before the unfortunate connexion that ended in her marriage, much more ardently did he now hope to be able to fix on suitable matches for his remaining daughters. But still, with the frightful example before his eyes, he knew not how to accomplish his desire. He had ever been averse to matches of mere interest, or those formed in the usual heartless and business-like manner which is customary in France, where love is, generally speaking, a matter as foreign to marriage as friendship in a mercantile transaction with us; where the fortune of the man is thrown into one scale, and that of his intended bride into the other! when, if she is "found wanting," her family, her connexions, and her interest, are flung in to make up the balance; but where beauty, accomplishments, or virtue have scarcely weight enough to turn the beam.

My story is a proof that there are exceptions to the general habit, and Le Vasseur had full in view the danger of encouraging a union founded on mutual attachment. The risks of such a connexion appalled him, and he shuddered when he saw an agreeable young man pay a visit at his house. The violence, or at least the sternness of his political principles, was a great bar to the attainment of his heart's first object. Interests became so divided, and animosities so strong, party spirit ran so high, and party hatred so deep, that the ruin of society was the consequence.

The overthrow of the imperial dynasty, and the re-establishment of the Bourbons, produced a convulsion of opinions which is known to all the world; but few, who have not seen the distant effects proceeding from these grand transactions, can form a just idea of the evils which hang upon the movements of the great. It is not in the crowded capital that such consequences can be estimated. There every circle of society plays round an axis of its own, but does not interrupt the evolutions of the others, forming with it a general system. There things go on as if no change had been. The theatres, the public walks, and the churches, are as crowded as ever, and men gaze on their fellows without frown or sneer, because they cannot from the million single out each particular opinion. A few only are marked by their avowal. One cannot stop another in the street, and ask for the confession of his faith; and the mixture of so many varying shades blends insensibly into a mass of general coloring, while the perpetual contact of opposite feelings rubs off the asperities from their surface. It is that which gives the true polish to city manners in the worst commotions; but in the remote seclusion of the country all is different. There men move in the open daylight of public cognizance. There are no hiding places wherein they

may skulk, nor crowds to give them shelter. Every individual of the thin-scattered population is a mark for the observation of others; and each one carries the stamp of his opinions upon him, as plain as if he bore the label of his party round his neck.

In scenes so confined, men are, in quiet times, joined together for their common comfort; but when the moment comes in which their interests clash, the ties which bound them are snapt asunder with a sharpness proportioned to their former tension. They fly off from each other like opposing metals in a crucible, and every figure stands out upon the scene in all the naked individuality of relief. They then herd together—but their is no grace in their combinations; and society looks like a piece of patchwork, where different colors every where glare out in independent solitude.

It is thus that every distinct *set* lends its aid to the general deformity, and the great charm of every thing living or inanimate, variety is lost. Every house becomes a nest for the nourishment of prejudice, while every disjoined member of the common family hangs loose and incapable of performing its functions; and, instead of aiding in the general harmony of nature, looks like a breaking out upon its fair and beauteous face.

Le Vasseur was one of those who lent their unintended aid to this demoralizing system. His idol was consistency; and in straining after it, he too often stretched a good feeling to excess. He was a rigid republican; and during the short interval of one hundred days, when the return of Bonaparte brought about events which changed the destiny of the world, Le Vasseur thought he saw a bright occasion for the re-establishment of that form of government which had his whole devotion. He boldly promulgated his views, and hoped to make himself a rallying point for all who thought with him. Many did come forward; and, had sufficient time been given for ripening their designs, the mischief might have spread. But the fate of Europe could not wait for the tardy development of these Utopian schemes, and Louis was once more fixed upon the throne which, it was discovered, had no chance of security unless it was erected on a constitutional basis.

Le Vasseur again sunk down into domestic quiet; but he excluded from his house all who, by deed or word, gave support to the reigning family. St. Croix was not so rigid; his military life had thrown him amongst men of all opinions and principles; and amongst those too, of no opinions and no principles. He was not a little infected by the general laxity of his associates; and, while he talked of liberality in the formation of his friendships, it was, in fact, licentiousness which he had in his mind. He mixed a good deal with his neighbors of politics different from those which he professed—which were those of his family and connexions; and Agnes and her sisters met at his house many persons who were never admitted to the sanctuary of their home.

Foremost among these visitors, in every thing which Agnes considered amiable and attractive, was the young de Monigny, the son of an emigrant who had returned from England with the king; and who, having lost beyond redemption the entire of his large posses-

sions, had been appointed to an official situation, of slight emolument, in the town close by St. Croix's residence. The son, who, like most young men of that station, was very poor, and very idle, soon became a favorite with St. Croix, and was often invited to his house. But he had better claims upon the admiration and regard of Agnes. A good person and expressive countenance were his most trivial advantages. The gravity of his deportment assorted well with her own; and the reflective, yet cheerful turn of his conversation, seemed the result of good sense engrafted on good nature, and formed a fine contrast with the flashy and flimsy manners of St. Croix. De Monigny had been brought up in England from his childhood. He spoke the language like a native; had studied the literature, the institutions, and the habits of the people, and had turned his observations to account. With all that noble warmth of national feeling, of which no Frenchman can divest himself, he possessed an open eye to the manifold faults of his countrymen;—but he was also sensible of their many merits, as well as of the errors of the nation he had so recently quitted. His study had long been to form for himself a character composed of the better qualities of both nations; and being one of the happy few whose feelings are subservient to their reason,—whose hearts submit to the dictates of their heads—he completely succeeded in his design. Thus, at thirty years of age (when Agnes first saw him,) he was one of those rare and inestimable models of manners, conduct and character, which it would be well if the awkward English youth, and the blustering young Frenchman, more frequently studied.

Agnes had just passed her twentieth year, a period when a female in the south of France acquires her full maturity of manners as well as mien. If the women there want the brilliant bloom which girls of that age wear in England, and that exquisite air of innocence which is nowhere to be rivalled, they have other charms peculiar and almost equivalent. An eye of fire, often tempered by reflection; a lip of ripe luxuriance; ringlets of polished jet, and teeth of pearl; while, under the autumnal tint of their transparent skin, the young blood circles on, giving a hue of mellow richness to the cheek, less bright but more subdued. Then the everbeaming expression of their glance—their intelligence—their softened air, that happy medium between languor and indifference—their light and graceful figures! Agnes united all within herself. No wonder, then, if between her and de Monigny a sympathy of tastes was followed by a mutual passion.

The lover, however, was no boy, nor his mistress a child. They saw their mutual danger. He was pennyless, for the scanty allowance granted him by his father was revocable at will; and he knew that his consent to such a match was out of the question. Agnes, on her part, remembered Eugenie. She felt also the indulgent kindness of her father; she knew that his happiness depended much on her, and she dreaded the impossibility of obtaining his sanction to her attachment. Such were the startling obstacles which lay in the way of Agnes and de Monigny, but they considered them too late—for they loved already; and a passion so forcible and so well founded

would have defied the warnings of a philosophy stronger even than theirs.

Eugenie soon perceived the nature of her sister's feelings, and she half rejoiced in the danger to which she fancied her exposed. Seeing no sort of criminality in the indulgence she had herself practised, she rather took pains to facilitate her sister's following her track, than made efforts to turn her from it; and unconscious of the real cause of her own feelings, which arose from that mingled selfishness and envy, the first consequence of guilt, she wished that Agnes might fall into the snare, confident that she would then, as well as herself, become the object of her father's estrangement, or, perhaps, by striking a new blow at his pride, weaken the strength of his particular resentment. She therefore carefully fanned the rising flame, and her impatience made her often question Agnes as to its progress.

Agnes, however, made no confidant to her attachment. She continued for some months to receive the professions of her lover, and she confessed to him alone the strength of her affection. They would have wilfully placed a bandage before their eyes, but they could not blind themselves to the utter hopelessness of their passion. They were neither of them, however, of that reckless and indolent turn, which makes lovers sometimes sink under the weight of their despair, and seems to impart a charm to its worst excesses. Agnes calculated a little on her father's unbounded affection. De Monigny knew that he possessed the esteem, as well as regard of his parent; and they agreed, by mutual plan, to endeavor to procure some relaxation of their relative severity. Agnes knew full well the impossibility of shaking Le Vasseur's political dislikes; but she had a faint hope that, by well arranged efforts, she might weaken one (it was all she asked) of his personal prejudices.

On every fair occasion she brought before him the particular merits of her lover, but that in a manner so guarded, as at first not to rouse his suspicions. The frequent recurrence to the same topic, and the animation with which the self-deceived Agnes discussed the character of one whom she affected to speak of with indifference, could not, however, escape her father's penetration; and in one of these conversations, brought about by Agnes, an unguarded warmth, in one of her eulogiums, told him clearly that her heart was irretrievably engaged. He considered de Monigny (although he had never seen him) as an enemy, in common with all his party. No sooner did the conviction of his daughter's attachment to an object so detested flash across his mind, than he felt himself the most desolate of mankind.

He burst into no paroxysm of rage, nor did one word of reproach fall from his lips. He looked as though the whole weight of destiny had fallen to crush him, and seemed bowed down by the magnitude of his misery.

Agnes saw the emotion which agitated her father, and it cut her to the soul. She addressed him in the most affectionate and soothing accents—assured him that the gratitude and affection which she owed him were nothing impaired—that her heart by being divided by two objects, with claims equally irresistible, but totally distinct, would acquire strength in its movements, and stability in its devotion. She

fixed her streaming eyes full upon his, and entreated him to reply; but he answered not a word. Resentment appeared dead to every possibility of utterance, but his looks were daggers.

Agnes was racked with the most agitated sensations. It was the first time that she had ever caused her father a painful moment; and she felt that her offence was wilful. But, with all the aggravation which this consciousness brought to her distress, the idea of abandoning her lover never entered her mind. She flung herself on her knees, and took her father's hands in hers. She wildly strained them to her heart, but they returned no pressure. She put them to her lips, and the tears which fell on them in showers spoke much more forcibly than words; but all seemed lost on the immovable sorrow of *Le Vasseur*. She implored his pardon—his pity: appealed to every thing generous in his nature; to every liberal sentiment; to every fatherly feeling. A cold attention to her words was, for a considerable time, all she could obtain. At length, as if life seemed to awaken again within him, he recovered his wonted animation. His eyes fixed themselves upon her, but not with their accustomed tenderness. A glazed fixedness usurped the place of their usual expression, and a sternly-sorrowful composure sat upon his brow. He spoke, and the agitated listener hung upon his words with the air of one who waited for the sentence of life or death. He addressed her with solemnity; briefly but forcibly, pointed out the probable consequences of the attachment she had formed; its evils, and, as he thought, its error. All this was pronounced with a determined coolness that she saw was the forerunner of some terrible decision. It was so in fact, for he swore that he never would consent to the union she desired; and that if she persisted in her determination to complete it, it was at her peril; for on its entire abandonment depended his ever again acknowledging her for his child.

He left her with a calm measured austerity. Agnes remained for some time buried in thought; but she gradually recovered her accustomed serenity, and when she met her father at the dinner-table, showed no change in look or demeanor. He, on the contrary, was silent and sorrowful; a dark and desperate struggle seemed to work in his breast, but far too deep to be betrayed by any common expression of pain. Agnes seemed to have recovered the shock, and to have already decided on her future steps. She had got over the fear of her father's determination, while he in his turn now dreaded that resolution which she possessed in common with himself, but in a more forcible degree, from hers being natural, and his assumed.—She hoped in vain to continue her self-command, and he fruitlessly endeavored to assume her tone; but an involuntary restraint was the consequent effect of their separate sensations, and it was as firmly established as if it had been fixed by mutual consent. He did not, therefore, object, a few days afterwards, to a proposal of his wife, that Agnes should go to pass some time at the house of *Eugénie*.—*Le Vasseur* had great reliance on the wisdom of Agnes, and he thought that by leaving her to its unrestricted sway, he was doing more toward the attainment of his object, than by offering in restraint incentives to disobedience.

CHAPTER VI.

On her arrival at St. Croix's she was met by the impatient de Monigny. He too had seen his father, and had as ineffectually endeavored to subdue his inveterate opposition. The only point the indignant father would concede was a confirmation of the trifling pension which he had hitherto allowed him; and on this inadequate sum the ardent lover resolved at all hazards to attempt his own and his mistress's support. The communication of their mutual failure, and their mutual grief, seemed to bind more closely their united hearts, for nature nor art holds no cement like sympathy of woe.

St. Croix and Eugenie, who were now in the confidence and counsel of the lovers, were present at this interview. They had never seen him so unmanned nor her so overcome. They essayed their kindest efforts to console them, but finding all fruitless, they left them to themselves.

From this day Agnes visibly pined away. The glow of mind which formerly shone in her face seemed overcast by a hopeless and immovable affliction. Her eye was dull and her cheek without bloom. No smile of pleasing thought played round her parched and colorless lip. Her hair hung disordered over her brow, and her hands fell listless by her side. Her ear was open to all sounds; but those of joy awoke no echo in her brain, which seemed to reverberate only to tones of grief and lamentation; while the burning thought within consumed her beauty and her happiness.

Her father saw her wasting away, and he himself appeared to decline as fast as she did. The secret of her attachment became known to all the family, and while all participated in the despondency of the father and daughter, they nevertheless made many hopeless and forlorn attempts to remove it. The manly remonstrances of the eldest son, the entreaties of St. Croix and Eugenie, the silent tears of the mother, the smiling endearment of the younger children, were all tried in vain upon Le Vasseur. He had throned himself upon a rock of resolution from which nothing could remove him; but with the self-confident blindness, which ever waits on obstinacy, he could see no danger in it. He trusted to his vigorous resistance gaining the victory in the end; and as his solicitors, in the behalf of Agnes, dropped off one by one from their energetic efforts, he only waited for the hour when she herself should pay the tribute to his determination, by yielding up her lover for her father's sake.

On this principle he did not even oppose her seeing de Monigny, for not doubting the result, he hoped his triumph would be the greater. This feeling did not proceed from any selfish or unworthy vanity; but he looked forward to the good effects of the example on his other children, and knew that it would be striking in proportion to its strength. Agnes, therefore, was frequently at St. Croix's, and saw de Monigny often and unrestrained. His passion seemed to grow with every hour, and his urgency for their marriage with every obstacle. Her attachment was tenderly but placidly evident; and

her friends, affected by her worn and wasted appearance, urged her, upon the time of her reaching the age which authorized her by law, to join herself to her lover in defiance of an unjust and positive parent. De Monigny was not backward in arguments to persuade her to this step; and Agnes herself *knew* that it must be the final alternative.

But as the day of her legal emancipation from parental authority arrived, she determined to make one effort more to melt the obduracy of Le Vasseur. At the very hour on which she completed her twenty-first year, she broke in unexpectedly on the retirement of his study, and flung herself upon his neck. He understood and *felt* the appeal, and for a moment his arms instinctively closed around her. "Oh, my father! my dear father!" cried Agnes, "drive me not to utter despair. You know not what you are doing by your rigid resolution. Give me your consent to be happy and respectable. You must, you must!" Her sobbing rendered further speech impossible, but her choked and convulsive efforts to articulate told that she had a world of arguments to urge. She would have gone on, but her father, gently disengaging himself, desired her, in a tone scarcely audible, to leave him. She would not, however, be repulsed. She clung to him as he strove to escape from her embrace. Her tears rolled upon his cheeks, and she even thought his own were mingled with them. But even if they were, they had not power to wash away his firm resolution. He gathered all the firmness of his voice and repeated his determination to see her die, and to die himself, sooner than give the required consent; and he was at last obliged forcibly to put her from him, and to escape from the struggle which he doubted his power to prolong.

That interview of misery was the last in which she ever saw her father. As soon as she could recover her presence of mind, and sufficient bodily strength, she arose and left the apartment. Without delay, or consultation with any of the family, she hurried from the house, and in the unfixed wildness of despair she traversed the road which led to the residence of her sister. Arrived there, she communicated the result of her attempt to de Monigny, St. Croix, and Eugénie. Her resolution was now unequivocal; and an immediate application, as prescribed by the laws, was made on her part to her father, demanding his consent to her intended marriage. A prompt refusal was the consequence. Another and another demand, followed by negatives, as steady and inflexible, left nothing which public rule considered as obstacles; and the necessary previous ceremonies being gone through, de Monigny led his affianced bride to the presence of the public officer, before whom the inviolable contract was required to be solemnized. They were attended by St. Croix and Eugénie—no more. How different to the glad procession which usually accompanies a wedded couple! How unlike the expensive and joyous celebration of Eugénie's own nuptials! Instead of the gaudy crowd, showering flowers and blessings on the youthful pair, there was no one to be seen but some gazing stragglers, attracted to the spot by uninterested and listless curiosity. The friends of both families kept far away, or if a passing few encountered by chance

the progress of the bridal party, they hurried from the path with averted eyes, as if there were contagion in its train. A beggar or two gave their common-place and sordid benediction,—and thus escorted they entered the public office. The mayor, who was an intimate friend of de Monigny's father, went through the duty which his situation imposed on him with a cold and sullen reserve. The greffier, who registered the contract, had his part in the gloomy combination, and seemed anxious to engraft on his ill-favoured visage a scion from the stem of his superior's disdain; while the ragged clerk, who affixed the seal of office, strove to redouble the reflections of authority in his gruff and greasy countenance, and stamped the arms of the town with an energy so startling, as to tell that an un-muttered imprecation lent its impulse to the act.

Every thing was blank and joyless. The looks of de Monigny depicted none of the fervid earnestness of expectant love, and Agnes was the living illustration of misery. St. Croix and Eugenie felt the infection, and no congratulatory embrace echoed round the wide and silent chamber. The party walked away; nor did the hallowed solemnities of religion follow the celebration of the civil ceremony, which was all that the law required. They were one—it was enough. They returned to the house of St. Croix, and the morrow ushered in no sounds of merriment, nor shone upon a face of new-born rapture.

Declining the longer participation of St. Croix's residence, the new-married couple removed the following day to a little cottage on his grounds, hastily fitted up for their reception. Cheerless and sad, it contained nothing by which the residence of the newly married may be almost invariably recognized. If elegance be wanting, or even the necessary comforts of life, there is at least, with scarcely an exception, in the homeliest hut, where wedded love first settles, a glow of genial kind; a breathing of indifference to worldly cares; a heaven of blithe enjoyment which defies both poverty and ill-fate. But if one exception ever did exist to this generally blessed lot, it was now, in the hopeless home of Agnes and her husband.

It was summer; and the unsheltered cot received the angry beams of the sun without any respite or relief; the hard earthen floor, the rough and unpainted walls, the scanty furniture, one ignorant, uncivilized attendant, all threw an air of utter wretchedness around, and "MISERY" seemed written on the walls. Some of the kind-hearted neighbors, by presents, added to the bountiful supplies of St. Croix and Eugenie, would have rendered this hopeless situation more tolerable; but they were all rejected with a pride that seemed to spring from bitterness of soul. Even the friendly visits of the few who still would cling to the unfortunate were declined; and none admitted, with the sole exception of the physician, the old and tried friend of the family. The presence of even Eugenie and St. Croix appeared at first unwelcome, and was in a little time wholly refused; while the frequent efforts of Madame Le Vasseur and her other children to see the unhappy Agnes were all in vain.

The mystery hanging over this resolute and unmitigated seclusion

at length determined the anxious mother to gain an entrance by stratagem; and accordingly one night, when darkness and rain left her approach less than ever suspected, she hastened towards the cottage of de Monigny attended by St. Croix. Eugenie, being in expectation of soon becoming again a mother, could not venture to join the party.

Just four months had now elapsed from the day of Agnes' marriage; and her mother had for some weeks abandoned her oft-repeated solicitations for admission. Her agitation on approaching the bleak and lonely habitation became extreme. She thought of her own home comforts, and the comparative elegancies which surrounded Eugenie. She asked herself which of the sisters was most worthy; and the bitterness of self-answering recollections quite overpowered her. She wept aloud, and was led on unresisting, by the guidance of St. Croix, endeavoring to stifle the audible expression of her distress. As they came close to the house, the low murmuring of voices from within made them pause for a moment, and they saw, through the half-opened shutters of the little parlor window, the hapless owners of this mansion of misery. They were seated at a coarse and rustic table: a solitary lamp, placed upon the chimney, threw its melancholy beam upon the wan and hollow countenances of Agnes and de Monigny. The former was busily employed at needle-work, and her husband, with looks of compassionate meaning, seemed striving to give her comfort.

Madame Le Vasseur could gaze no longer. She raised the latch of the door,—for no precautions close the houses of these remote and secluded parts: but if robbers did infest the country, there was little temptation for their attacks in the scanty possessions of de Monigny. The sudden opening of the door made him now start from his chair, and when he recognized the intruders, a flush of anger rose upon his pallid cheek; but he suppressed his emotion and turned to Agnes, who, in the first movement of surprise, and ungarded affection, advanced to embrace her mother. But Madame Le Vasseur for a moment shrunk back. A thousand conflicting sensations rushed at once across her mind, for as her eye caught the self-betraying form of Agnes, she saw with a glance that she was in the most advanced state of pregnancy. The recollection of her situation came like lightning to the memory of Agnes. She made an effort to fold her robe around her; and as the first astonished pang of Madame Le Vasseur subsided, and as she was hurrying forward to meet the proffered embrace of her daughter, the returning consciousness of the latter made her sink with empty arms into her chair.

The remainder of the interview may be better imagined than described. The astonished St. Croix hastened back to convey the unexpected news to Eugenie; while Madame Le Vasseur spent the remainder of the night in assurances of forgiveness, and many a common-place, though heart-felt condolence, quite lost on the despairing listener.

The dawning of a heavy morning brought no gleam of hope to the afflicted group, but it showed more plainly to the mother the ravages which a little time had made in her once beautiful and blooming

child. Her anguish was almost insupportable ; and she saw that she but added to the distress of Agnes, -who seemed overpowered and bent down under the conviction that her *father's curse* awaited his discovery of her situation. With this feeling she implored her mother to keep the secret from him, and to give her a chance of dying unbetrayed. She uttered no reproach against him, nor did she shelter her offence with the plea which his obstinate opposition might have given her, even when confessing to her mother, that the day of his resolute unkindness, on discovering her attachment, was that in which the despair of Monigny and herself led to the fatal forgetfulness of his duty, and the fall of her honor. But she now looked upon the past without pain, and mechanically made preparations for the future ; while her whole powers of thought and feeling were concentrated in the dread of the malidiction, which once riveted her to the earth, although launched against another.

Her mother, to quiet her fears, told her that she would be discreet; and, assuring her that her secret should be safe from her father she left her somewhat more composed. On the return of Madame Le Vasseur to St. Croix's, however, she, in concert with them, agreed to make every thing known to her husband. They unanimously agreed, that much was to be expected from his natural tenderness upon his hearing the truth of Agnes's suffering and from the strong affection towards her, which was best evinced by his wretchedness ever since the fatal hour in which he drove her from his bosom. Full of the most benevolent hopes, they hastened to his house ; and without formal or settled plan, the intelligence burst from them, in an united disclosure, which none of them could have made individually, but which he trusted they could not thus withstand the force of.

Le Vasseur heard them in silence. A smile was curling his lip. They thought it incredulity, but it was despair ! His hands trembled, his colour went and came, he sunk back in his chair, burst into a fit of loud hysterical laughter, and would have gone mad, had he not had relief in a passionate flood of tears. They were the first he had shed for many a day. When he came a little to himself he motioned to the door, and there was an awful dignity in his gesture which commanded an immediate obedience. They left him ; and in less than ten minutes they saw a servant leave the court-yard on horse-back at full speed, with a letter in his hand.

With that wilful deception which the most desperate cases cannot conquer, Madame Le Vasseur, Eugenie, and even St. Croix, felt convinced that the letter contained the pardon of Agnes. They proceeded once more to Le Vasseur's study, in half-satisfied anxiety that their belief would be confirmed. They were admitted. Le Vasseur was sitting in his chair, calm and unimpassioned. They ardently inquired what were the contents of his letter. Suddenly starting up, with a look of phrensy, and a tone of fearful energy, he cried, " my curse ! "

Some hours after Madame Le Vasseur had quitted Agnes in the morning, the effects of the sudden and long protracted agitation became apparent in the latter. She felt every symptom of approach-

ing delivery, and her husband hastened off to the town, which was at some distance, where resided the physician, who being in her confidence throughout expected the summons. Hardly had de Monigny lost sight of his dwelling, when the servant bearing Le Vasseur's letter arrived. The ignorant girl who had the care of her mistress immediately handed her the letter; and Agnes, recognising her father's writings, opened it with the eagerness of hope. She forgot for a moment her pains, and lost all sense of suffering in the magic of expectation. Her eye ran quickly over the few lines contained in the billet, when the horror struck servant saw her sink back in the bed, uttering a piercing scream, the herald of a fit of violent convulsion. Shrieks of maniac wildness, the voice of mingled agony and delirium, burst loudly from her, and ceased but with one fierce and closing spasm, which at one and the same moment, gave birth to a fine female child, and broke the heart of the ill-fated mother!

As de Monigny returned towards home, accompanied by the doctor, they heard the terrific accents. As they neared the house, the shriek was hushed; and when they entered, Agnes was quite dead. The distracted servants, who stood by her side, did not think of going out to meet the husband's approach; and as he rushed into the room, breathless and abrupt, such was the spectacle which met his sight.

The following evening Agnes was privately buried in the neighboring cemetery, her hand, even in the grave, grasping the fatal letter which was the warrant of her death, and which had been in vain attempted to be taken from it. St. Croix and her younger brothers followed her funeral as sole mourners. The eldest fled from his father's house, overwhelmed by the double shame which had fallen on his family, and the infatuated severity which had perpetuated its disgrace. Eugenie was dreadfully shocked on learning her sister's fate; but the fears were exaggerated of those who thought the intelligence would have endangered her safety.

The infant was alive and well at the time I heard these particulars, and had not to that day received a morsel of nourishment, except from the hands of its inconsolable father.

NOTE.

From the moment of my seeing this story *in print* I have looked upon it with repugnance, and regret. In manuscript, an author's errors are less manifest to him; for it is, compared to print, very much what thought is to language: and it is only when we speak our minds, or see them set in type, that we are truly conscious of their mistakes.

The place this story occupies in these volumes is correct as regards the order of their composition, although it stands both last and least in my regard. It was my first attempt; and I can only account for my bad taste in having chosen its events for illustration, from the fancy, common to inexperienced writers, of selecting some subject of exaggerated interest, and the difficulty of drawing the line between the exciting and the revolting. The main incidents of "The Curse," are true to the letter—and even this last expression may be taken literally. But "Truth should not be told at all times;" and there is no time at which it should be more scrupulously concealed than when its naked exposure may give a false expression as to national character. That instances of the nature of those I have here related might be found, even at this day, in France is possible. But, even so, it would be most unjust to the country at large to draw a sweeping inference against its moral state. I fear that my story may have produced some mischief of that kind; and if I did not reflect that such might have been the case time enough to prevent the evil (by burning the MS.) it must be ascribed to my never hoping for a wide circulation to my pages, to the hastiness with which foreigners write about strange countries, and perhaps to their facility for believing, in spite of proverb or proof, that one swallow *does* make a summer.

France has been so thoroughly explored during the last twenty years, by travellers from all parts of the world, that any new testimony to the propriety, in manners and conduct, of its unmarried women is needless. This being the main point now at issue, I confine this explanatory note to it alone; and I wish to call back attention only to the picture of the two sisters, sketched with what I have long felt to be so hurried and so unskilful a hand. Readers, who may not be stopped on this threshold of my book, will find, as they go along, delineations of French female character quite as real

and of far more general likelihood. And I promise them that, as I myself proceed in re-reading (after a lapse of several years) the stories in succession, I shall not hesitate to point out with equal frankness as I do now whatever may strike me as erroneous or objectionable.



LA VILAINE TETE.

They who, by accident, have some inevitable and indelible mark on their persons if they want not virtue, generally prove fortunate.

LORD BACON.



LA VILAINE TETE.

CHAPTER I.

I took the boat on the Garonne, in the fall of the year, that treacherous season, when the varying tints of the foliage, like the hectic flush of consumption make us forget the decay of nature, while admiring its loveliness. I sailed down the river as far as Pauilhac, a little port some leagues from its mouth; a kind of halting place for vessels bound to Bordeaux, as Gravesend is to London.

The views on this part of the Garonne are fine, but can be scarcely called picturesque. The stream is too wide, its banks not high enough, and the country beyond too flat to entitle the landscape to that epithet so dear to travellers. But there are some interesting points. Lormont, for example, a village on the right hand, inhabited chiefly by ship-builders, as is evident, from the many skeletons and newly-finished vessels standing on the stocks. A height rises abruptly behind the houses; and, being covered with vineyards to the top, has, till late in the season, a very cheerful and even romantic appearance. Some villages of less note; occasional villas belonging to the gentry of Bordeaux; the round fort in the middle of the river, called, from its shape, *le pate*; and the towns of Bourg and Blaye, with the citadel of the latter, are the other stationary objects which attract attention. Then you have the ships scudding up or down the river; all sails set, and all hearts joyous, if the wind is fair; tacking and laboring, should it be foul. An occasional steam-boat is seen, plodding along like a Dutch merchant, enveloped in smoke, and turning neither to right nor left, while many little fishing smacks and pilot boats dance gaily on the waves, and plunge their prows through the spray.

I have not, perhaps, done justice to the beauties of the Garonne; but it must be remembered that I paint it *below* Bordeaux, as it appears to a man coming down the country, his mind filled with the inspiration of much finer scenes. Sailing *up* the river, after a voyage of some weeks, the impressions it excites are far different. I know this by experience; for I well recollect, that after the tedium of the sea, and the tossing of the Bay of Biscay, in one of its angriest moods, I thought the light-house of Cordouan the model of architect-

ure, the bleak sands at the river's mouth the perfection of rural loneliness, and every spot as we ascended a little isolated Eden.

I need not tell my readers that the confluence of the Garonne and the Dordogne, just above Blaye, forms the Gironde, an extensive estuary, with all the attributes of the sea. A few leagues below this junction of the rivers I stepped out of the boat on the beach of Pauilhac, followed by Ranger, and accompanied by the ennui occasioned by my four hours' lazy voyage.

In visiting Medoc, I meant—the phrase is admissible from a sportsman—to kill two birds with one stone; viz. to see the principal growth of those wines so palatable to us under the name of claret, and to enjoy two or three days' good shooting, which had been promised to me by a Bordeaux friend. But man is himself no better than the sport of chance and circumstance, and his most settled purposes are often, like scattered covies, disturbed and routed by feelings beyond their control, and which worry them without leave or license. The morning after my arrival at Pauilhac, the glimpse of one old chateau was sufficient to drive both my purposes totally out of my head.

Having risen early, and taken to the road, I was proceeding towards the grounds of my friend, when this before mentioned chateau lying in my path, I inquired of an old peasant the name of its owner. Stopping for a moment from his work of hedge-cutting, he turned round and answered, "The Marchioness de la Roche-Jacquelin."

"Indeed!" cried I, "is she here, then?" "Here! every body, who knows any thing of the Marchioness, knows that she's at Paris," replied he, astonished, it would seem, at my logical ignorance; and in a tone of reproof, which seemed to accuse me of having insulted an acquaintance to which I had not the slightest pretension.

"Indeed, my friend," returned I, "I do know a great deal of the marchioness, although I never saw her, and was not aware of her residence."

Our conversation ended here; and wishing him a good morning I walked towards the next village. A full tide of thought was rushing on my brain, and the name which had been just mentioned to me opened every sluice of memory. My whole mind was filled with the remembrance of La Vendee, so chastely and beautifully illustrated in the work of that interesting woman, whose property I now tread on. It was a situation fit to recal the emotions which I had so often experienced in La Vendee itself—that ground once eminent, and always sacred—and I felt my pulse swell and my bosom throb, as they were wont to do, while standing on the spot immortalized by some glorious action, I paid my homage to heroism in its own peculiar sanctuary. This is to me of all parts of France the most interesting; it is full of associations of the most inspiring nature; it awakens every thing lying dormant in the mind that bears relationship to *valor* or to virtue? it breathes an air of sympathy and sorrow into the heart, and arouses at once recollections of heroic devotion, and indignation for the ruin of this its noblest temple.

La Vendee, despoiled and desolated, is no longer what it was.—The face of nature is not changed, but the movements which were

went to light up its features are gone by. The thickly-wooded landscape is the same as ever; the verdant mass of foliage, the gushing rivulets, the rising hillocks, the scattered villages, still show themselves. Isolated chateaux raise here and there their red-tiled roofs above the aged oaks; and many a blackened wall shows you where others stood, and *what* destroyed them. Man, too, is there: in fact, the district still exists, in all the visible signs of life; but the fine soul of its inspiration is no more. The mild, yet hardy nature of the people, is not quite changed; they are still hospitable, beneficent, and brave; their cottages and their hearts are open to the stranger; they share with him their humble fare, and the fullness of their sorrows—but they are a broken down race. Their courage shines out on a sudden impulse or unexpected excitement; but the natural tone of former intrepidity has died away in the artificial efforts which tyranny forced from them. The quickening impulse of domestic example has long ceased to animate the peasants of La Vendée. They see no more the lords of their idolatry living among them in the fellowship of honorable association, holding out the arm of power to cherish, not to crush, their followers; giving notions of right, not by precept, but by action; teaching religion, not by persecution, but by piety; endearing peace, by deeds of quiet virtue; and leading to battle by such spirit-stirring words as these; “If I advance, follow me; if I shrink back, kill me; if I die, revenge me!”

Such was the oft indulged train of thought that came revived and fresh upon me as I now walked up to the rustic inn, whose designation was a withered branch of fir-tree, stuck in the wall and a roughly-colored print below it, representing a couple of jolly fellows sitting, glasses in hand, beside a huge crimson bottle, which shot forth a cloud of blue froth. “Good March beer,” in large letters at the foot, was the key to this hieroglyphic, and a signal of invitation to the thirsty passenger. Sure of a welcome in the common home of every wanderer with sixpence in his pocket, I entered the house, and asked if I could have a bed for the night. A little hesitation on the part of the host, a few frivolous questions about my passport from the landlady, and some sly looks of mingled suspicion and coquetry from her chubby and sunburnt daughter, all ended in the grant of my demand, and in my being installed in a snug little room looking out upon the garden. being fairly in possession, I bethought myself of a very important and oft-required assistant in the arrangements of all men, but particularly of those who carry their wardrobe on their shoulders—I mean a washerwoman.

“O yes, sir,” said the landlords daughter, “to be sure there’s a washerwoman in the village. Shall I run and look for her?”

“If you please, after you have given me my breakfast.”

The washerwoman came in consequence; and, as I offered her a glass of wine from my bottle, she thanked me with an accent which I knew at once to be Vendean. “What, you too are from La Vendée!” exclaimed I. “Alas! yes, sir,” said she, “many a long day;

though I seem to bear the token marked on my tongue as firmly as it is stamped in my heart."—She here wiped a tear from her eye.—The poor woman had a very ill-favored countenance ; and as to the rest of her person, I can only say with Milton, that she had "fit body to fit head ;" thus affording another proof that *proportion* may be prejudicial to the cause of beauty.

Her birth-place was, however, enough to ensure her my regard.—We entered deeply into chat ; and, in return to my many questions about the circumstances of the celebrated Madam de la Roche-Jacquelin and her family, she gave me much information. This, though interesting to the sensitive or curious reader, being of private and existing individuals, I do not feel myself warranted, by any example, to make public.

Our conversation insensibly turned on tales of La Vendee ; and half a day was thus spent before the old washerwoman bundled up my little packet of two shirts, two pair of—peha ! no matter—and bade me good evening. My mind was full of the subject ; and forgetting, for that night, both vineyards and partridges, I sketched the following *true story*, which, at my leisure, I put into its present form.

CHAPTER II.

There is no truth more obvious than that vicious times afford the best field for the display of virtue ; and never was the axiom more fully exemplified than during the progress of the French Revolution. Many people find it hard to mingle notions of virtue with the memory of that event ; yet, gratitude, humanity, and honor were never more frequent—because so many opportunities for their exertion have been rarely ever afforded. Such qualities as these are best understood by contrast ; and, in fact, require the display of their opposites to bring them into action. Bad passions and bad men obtrude themselves upon us : the good must be called forth to be observed. Evil forms the foreground of the social picture, but brings out rather than conceals the amiable and mild perspective. The country and the period in question formed the mighty frame-work of this moral exhibition ; and it was in La Vendee that human nature appeared abstractedly the worst. It was there, too, that more instances of virtue occurred than in any other part. There the most hateful passions were let loose, Frenchman warred against Frenchman ; the son battled against the father ; brother was opposed to brother ; yet there it was, amidst rapine, hatred, and revenge, that all the finer feelings of the heart were seen to flourish ;

"Not in the sunshine and the smiles of Heaven,
But wrapp'd in whirlwinds, and begirt with woes."

In this isolated region resistance to the revolutionary spirit was not caused by feelings of a political nature. They were strictly private, and therefore more pure. It was not that the Vendéans wished to uphold the prerogatives of the crown, or the errors of the court. They were unconnected with the one, and ignorant of the other. The name of the king excited in them feelings of endearment only as it was connected with the nobility, under whom they lived and thrived. Had these flung away their privileges and titles, the peasants would have been as willingly republicans as royalists. Their hardy and unsophisticated minds cared nothing for distinctions. They were happy; they had every right which they required; and felt that attachment which free-born gratitude inspires. They took arms to protect their lords from injury, and their altars from pollution. Loyalty and religion were blended with the more domestic feelings; and the only ill they feared was the removal of that authority which elsewhere meant abuse, but was to them protection. It is this which sanctifies their struggles. Had the memory of their bravery and their misfortunes come to us merely as intrepid assertors of political rights, we should have felt for them all the admiration and regret which is due to unsuccessful courage. But the warriors of La Vendée take hold of our sympathies by tenderer, and even stronger, ties. In the soldier we see also the husband and the father. No cold-blooded mercenaries come to claim our compassion, but ardent patriots to command it. We view them in all the energy of home devotion—in all the softness of fire-side endearment—in the strenuous exercise of domestic honor. Not rushing on from the impulse of mere ambition, but rallying round their brave commanders with all the warmth of family regard; and fighting with them side by side upon their native fields, at once the cradle of their blessings and the sepulchre of their woes.

The events of the Vendean wars abound with incidents of deep but sorrowful interest. The fortunes and fate of the rebel leaders most naturally attract our attention; but the suffering was so general, there was such a perfect equality of wretchedness, that we cannot gaze upon the devotion of the chief without mingling our regards with that of his followers. Did I choose to work on high-wrought feelings; did I want a hero of romantic endowment or wonderful feats, they are to be had in rich abundance; but such was not my object. I chose a simpler theme and humbler actors, abandoning for truth all views of exaltation.

In the heart of that part of this devoted province, called *Le Bocage*, stood a retired straggling village, containing about twenty houses; but these were so irregularly scattered, that they occupied a surface which might have sufficed for ten times the number. This village was far away from any high road; and, being skirted by impenetrable woods, and surrounded by rising grounds, it is impossible to imagine a more complete seclusion. The humble community by which it was occupied were ignorant of the world, and did not wish for worldly knowledge. Their pastor, a mild and amiable man, assured

them that he had voluntarily renounced it, and that the votaries of fashion held a lot less happy than theirs. The seigneur, who lived in the chateau close at hand, was another practical example of the curate's veracity; for he also had for many years abandoned the pleasures of high life, and lived among his peasantry, more like a father than a master. These two authorities were all in all with the honest creatures whom they governed, and with a sway so gentle that this influence was but their due. Nothing was more reciprocally made amiable than the intercourse between these poor people, their pastor, and their lord. In each gradation there was, to be sure, a variety of feeling; but it harmonized so well together, that it would be hard to point out the distinctions.

The church was a lowly edifice, suiting the humility of the teacher and his flock. The simple altar and unornamented walls formed a striking contrast with the gorgeousness of a metropolitan embellishment; and, notwithstanding all that I have heard of "the majesty of religion," and the "magnificence of worship," I doubt whether the gilding and polishing of a Roman or Parisian temple ever reflected a congregation more devout than that which filled this modest sanctuary. But nothing like fanaticism was known among them. They did their duty too well to have leisure for excesses; guilt rarely sullied the round of their occupations. The worthy curate often wept over the sorrows to which all, alas! are subject, but he as often smiled at the innocent eagerness with which his parishoners would labor to convict themselves of crime. Their confessions were frequent; their penances slight; and their absolution safely conceded. They were, however, as gay as they were pious, and as fond of dancing as of prayer. They never neglected their devotions, or forgot their pleasures. The grass plat before the little church was the scene of their Sunday festivities; and probably neither religion nor recreation was the worse for this affinity. The good priest presided almost as regularly at the one as the other. Reclined in the shade of a group of elms, as old as the ivy-covered walls of the church itself, his smiles gave a sanction to the pleasures on which he gazed. The village contained three or four musicians; and the rustic concert often charmed to the spot the seigneur and his family, with any occasional guest who happened to be at the chateau. There was among the inhabitants an equality purely republican; but they were unruffled by those dreams of vanity and ambition, to which even republicans are subject. They were alike poor, industrious, well-disposed and happy. To trace the portrait of one family would be to give the picture of all.

The cottages, too, were nearly all alike; but one was pre-eminent above the rest for the peculiar beauty of its situation and its neatness. A French cottage, even now, when the political condition of the peasantry is so much improved, brings no idea of outward comfort to the mind. At the period in question its claims were still less; and in our village external slovenliness and dirt were as much apparent as in any other. But one habitation formed a pleasing exception to this general reproach. It stood apart from the others, on the banks of a rivulet which ran between the village and the wood. It was surrounded by a small garden, kept neat and blooming. The

walls were covered with creeping shrubs; and flowering plants were placed around, carefully cherished in winter, and in summer fantastically arranged on benches built against the cottage. The well, sunk, as is usual, in the middle of the garden and front of the house, showed nothing of naked deformity or uncouth ornament.— Its wall, rising about three feet from the ground, was surrounded by a little hedge of myrtle and rose-trees, which, in the season of bloom and beauty, showed a profusion of gay flowers. A couple of vines were trained along the front of the cottage, and their stems carefully preserved by a wooden covering nailed round them. Every thing within was in unison with the simple neatness without. The room, which served as kitchen and parlor, was furnished scantily, but cleanly. The copper vessels shone bright on the walls, and the table and chairs were white from regular and careful scouring. The sleeping apartment had a comfortable bed; a small closet adjoining the kitchen held another; and a couple of presses were stocked with coarse but wholesome linen, a luxury enjoyed by the French peasants to what we might think excess.

The owner of this humble yet enviable mansion, was an old woman, bent down with age and infirmity. Her whole stay and solace in the world was her granddaughter, whom she had brought up—an orphan from the cradle. This poor girl was every thing that she could desire, except in one respect; and possessed all that her situation required, but one advantage, with which, it must be confessed, there are few who can well entirely dispense. Jeannette was amiable, cheerful, tender-hearted; a good spinner, active in household affairs, and pious; but beauty formed no part of her possessions: for she was in appearance ugly—not simply *plain*, but downright ugly. This utter absence of personal advantages had procured her among the neighbors the title of "*la vilaine tête*." To let the reader judge whether or not exaggeration had suggested this epithet, the following portrait is given; and coming from a friendly hand, its truth may be relied on.

Jeannette was—but the pen refuses to proceed! It is, in truth, but an ungracious task, and cannot be persevered. How different are the efforts to depict the traits of beauty! There is, indeed, enjoyment in dwelling on their memory; in essaying, however, vainly, to commit to paper with pen or pencil the impressions they stamp upon the mind; in striving to trace out those indelible yet shadowy recollections, which flit before the fancy, so fairy-like, so lovely, so evanescent; inspiring to pursuit, yet baffling every effort at detention. How I have labored at this hopeless task! How strove to do justice by description to that face and form which are ever before my eyes! How, while I thought to fashion out one feature, has the memory of another swam upon my brain, confounding all in an overflow of blending loveliness! Even now, they seem to float before me in the unfading sweetness which needs no contrast to increase it, which time and distance purify, but weaken not. But—but to return to my heroine; that is, to poor Jeannette. There are cases where 'tis best to leave the reader to himself; and this is one. Imagination may complete the portrait I would have commenced, without fearing

to err by extravagance. Let it paint her ever so unprepossessing in appearance, and it cannot go too far.

Jeannette, unlike most people, cared but little for that which she did not possess; and was rather disposed to dwell upon those compensations which nature had given her. She knew that she was ugly—*very* ugly—but she felt that she was strong and healthy, and her composure was not ruffled. Her grandmother's cottage contained but little looking-glass to throw reflections on her defect, and the neighbors were too good-natured to supply so unkind an office. I really believe that she thought so seldom of her face, and heard so little to make her remember it that she only knew of its peculiarities from the faithful but officious brook in which she was accustomed to wash the linen of the cottage, and that of the neighboring chateau, confided to her care. This was her chief employment; and, taking pride in doing it well, she was early distinguished as the best *flanchiseuse* in the village, and her own and her grandmother's caps and kerchiefs were by far the most conspicuous for their whiteness and "getting up." This early accomplishment turned afterwards, as we shall see, to good account.

Jeannette, it will be easily believed, dreamt not of love or marriage. She certainly was never tempted to one or the other. But somehow she never wanted a partner at a dance; her garden, in which she had such pride, was cultivated by the voluntary labors of the village lads; did any thing go wrong in the cottage, she was sure of the gratuitous aid of some rustic mechanic; and on her *jour de fête* none of the girls around could show more of those interesting, though homely, tokens which affection presents to worth. Such is the power of virtue and such the value in which the French peasants hold it, that Jeannette never knew what it was to be slighted or forgotten. It is true she was called *la vilaine tête*, but nicknames in rustic society are by no means tokens of ill-nature. A joke is there given and taken, as it ought to be every where, in good part; and the bitter sarcasms of good-breeding find no place in the unrefined enjoyments of country life. Jeannette bore her designation with great good humor, and custom quite reconciled her to it. She knew it was very just, and therefore was satisfied that she had no right to complain, truth being, by persons of her rank in life, seldom or never disguised. But she had another appellation, which might have consoled a more sensitive mind—that was, "The good Jeannette." This was just as involuntarily as the other, and not a bit more sophistical; for she was, to reverse a common expression, "as good as she was ugly,"—and that is saying a great deal. When ever a child was ill, or an old woman complaining, or if an accident happened to man or beast, Jeannette was ever one of the first to offer her assistance, and the last to discontinue it. She had also the great advantage of depriving envy of its sting; for was one of her female companions ever so plain, she had a consolation in looking at Jeannette; and, was she ever so wretched, a comfort in listening to her. Her advice was sought for by her friends in all emergencies; and what was more wonderful it was almost as certain to be taken as asked.—

To make matters short, and tell a plain fact in few words, she had the blessings of the whole village, old and young.

Thus might she have run the quiet tenor of her way, and gone in happy obscurity down the stream of life, had not the public event which agitated her country forced her from her retreat. It may be a question whether or not she merits immortality. Even if she does, these pages do not hope to secure her that reward. Jeannette was exactly eighteen years of age when the village tranquility was first disturbed by the sound of the tocsin of war. Alas! how woful did that sound break over the stillness of the gentle night, to the ears of those who knew of what it was the signal. Jeannette was not one of those. She and her young companions had heard much of previous events. Every day was hot with accounts of distant movements and alarms; but in the gaiety of youth they believed that such disturbance could never come home to them, and they had no notion of the horrors they were so soon to witness. Jeannette was in bed, and on the first sound of the alarm-bell hurried on her clothes and looked from the lattice to ascertain the quarter of the fire, supposing such to be the cause of the summons. She looked out, but all was darkness. No flame colored the clouds which rolled heavily above, nor tinged the trees whose foliage overhung the cottage. The air was impervious to her inquiring gaze, and the low breathing wind was scarcely strong enough to rustle the leaves around. This unusual repose of nature looked like the sleep of death. Jeannette listened to the bell with a dread which no visible danger could have inspired; and she shuddered without knowing why. At length murmuring voices came upon the air, and a drum was loudly beaten. Shouts of assembled men were soon distinguished, and then the firing of distant musketry. Jeannette trembled in every joint, and stole from the closet where she slept, intending to pass softly through the garden, to demand at the next cottage the meaning of such awful sounds. She entered the kitchen, and was surprised to hear whisperings in her grandmother's apartment; and opening the door she distinguished by the glimmering of the little lamp, half shaded to conceal the light, the old woman and two of her neighbors on their knees devoutly joined in prayer. The entrance of Jeannette made them start up in alarm; while she, terrified at their solemn and fear-stricken looks, flung herself into her grandmother's arms and burst into tears.

When their agitation had subsided, Jeannette resolved on going out into the road which passed before the garden, and connected the irregular and scattered cottages. She learned enough from her grandmother's melancholy visitors to know that the alarm without proceeded from the union of the villagers and the neighboring peasants, brought together by the determination of the seigneur and the cure; who, tired of forbearance, had at length resolved on rousing the parish to the aid of the more forward opponents of the Revolution.

Jeannette resolved to go into the road and view the passing scene. She did so, but a comparative tranquillity had succeeded the recent tumult. Nothing was to be distinguished, but she trod on well-known ground; and following the murmur of retiring voices, she

soon reached the hillock upon which the church was built. The great entrance was open ; and to the astonishment of our heroine, a stream of light issued from it, flinging a wild and solemn glare upon the tall elms planted around. The pitchy darkness of the night made the contrast more striking, and the sighing of the increasing breeze in the viewless branches seemed the utterance of awful and agitated nature. Scattered groups of peasants passed now and then across the illuminated space just opposite the church door, as they emerged from the gloom of one side, and, with hurried pace, were lost in a moment in the darkness of the other. Some entered the church ; a few stood still in deep and anxious conversation—but all were armed. Weapons of various kinds were borne by those sinewy arms, which grasped with indiscriminate vigor whatever could be turned to purposes of vengeance. As Jeannette leaned, pale and trembling, against a tree, she was started by occasional shots from approaching parties of peasants, and gradually a number of fires were lighted on the rising grounds in the vicinity, bursting up in columns of flame and smoke, and casting a dark red gleam upon the woods below. While Jeannette contemplated, with breathless admiration, the impressive scene before her, a splitting shout burst from the holy edifice. She sprang from the earth at the electric sound. It was so unnatural—so demon-like, compared to the low murmurings of prayer which were wont to breathe through the consecrated building, that she doubted for a moment the reality of what she heard. But another, of still louder and more lengthened tone, brought conviction to the agitated listener, who, hurried by an uncontrollable impulse hastened to the open door to satisfy her intense and terrified curiosity. She stopped awhile under the porch, which projected beyond the entrance, and she gazed upon the scene within. A mass of people of both sexes filled the body of the church. They were standing, and as they listened attentively to the discourse of the cure, hundreds of bayonets, pikes, and other martial instruments, glittered above their heads. The altar was lighted up as if for more than a common occasion ; and on its steps stood the seigneur, accoutred in all the irregular array of rustic warfare. Beside him was the cure, dressed in the full splendor of priestly decoration. The first was a figure fit for the pencil of Salvator Rosa ; hardy, inflexible, and firm. His careless apparel, flung on with the romantic grace of a banditt mountaineer ; a leathern belt round his waist, its large steel buckle shining between the rude carving of two enormous pistols ; his left hand grasping the hilt of an ancient and rusty sword ; the other supported on the muzzle of a brass barrelled carbine :—his black eyes shooting fire, and his deep-knit brow garnished by the raven curls which escaped from beneath a crimson handkerchief, tied tightly round his head.* The priest might have been supposed the em-

* Their head-dress, common to the Vendean chiefs, was adopted from their heroic comrade, Henri de la Roch-Jacquelin, who was thus first distinguished in the revolutionary battles. He made himself a mark for the bullets of his enemies and the imitation of his friends. "Fire at the red handkerchief!" was repeatedly cried by the republicans who witnessed the uncommon valor of its wearer. His danger being pointed out to him, made

bodied form of one of Raphael's exquisite imaginings. His whole expression calm, inspired, ineffable; his blue eyes beaming with a light as if from heaven; the graceful drapery of his attire giving additional height to his tall spare form: his sallow cheeks showing, in transparent currenty, the blood which mantled through them. The seigneur stood fixed and statue-like, as if motion was stopped by the intensity of some determined thought. The cure had his hands raised in the energy of eloquence, while he harangued his ardent congregation. The distance allowed but a part of his oration to reach the wondering ears of Jeannette. She, however, distinguished enough to inform her that he was exciting his listeners to battle, and promising them victory. In the first instant of surprise she fancied herself the dupe of some illusion; and she sought to doubt the identity of those before her. Were they not some impudent impostors, dressed in masquerade? Could that be the placid seigneur? Could that be the meek and merciful preacher of forgiveness? Such were the natural doubts of the uninformed Jeannette. But it is not strange that persecution should arouse the most sensitive feelings of the soul, nor that forbearance should be turned to vengeance by the hatred of oppression. So it was now with these altered associates, who seemed to revive the days of old, when the high priest Joad preached revolt against the tyranny of Athalia; or the more recent times, when Peter the hermit poured forth his irresistible eloquence to the warriors of the cross.

Jeannette listened with a fixed and half-unwilling conviction to the discourse of the venerable ecclesiastic. His words appeared to flow from the impulse of inspiration, and at every pause reiterated shouts burst from the highly excited throng. The skilful orator saw that his point was gained. The energy of deep devotion was blended with valorous ardor; and, while enthusiasm seemed at its height, he took from off the altar a flag of white silk. With his face again turned to his audience, he waved the snowy banner, in impassioned grace, above his head. As it floated round him, his long grey locks were agitated by the air—his countenance beamed bright—his whole frame was moved with fervid agitation, and he looked the semblance of something more than mortal. The people gazed on him awhile in reverential silence, waiting for the sounds of his sonorous and impressive accents. "Behold, my children," he at length said, "the banner of your God, your country, and your king!" The crowd caught anew the lightning impulse from his look, and a loud and long continued cry of "God, our country, and our king!" re-echoed through the church. "Let us now consecrate this sacred symbol of virtue and of valor!" He performed the ceremony with pious fervor. When it was finished he spoke once more "Who now volunteers to guard the holy banner?" Scarcely had he pronounced the question, when a crowd of young men sprang over the railing of the altar, and with brandished swords hurried, in friendly contest, to seize upon the flag. The seigneur assisted the cure in repressing

Henri persist in what he had first done by chance; and to save him from particular notice, all his brave companions followed his example. See *The Memoirs of Madame de la Roche-Jacquelin*.

their zeal, and the former exclaimed aloud, "No, my friends—be this honor mine! It is the only distinction I claim from you. For the rest, we will march together to the combat. We will fight side by side—conquer together, or, if it must be so, die. Look ever to this symbol of our cause; while it floats above me, the path of glory is not distant; when it falls to earth—then dig your standard bearer's grave!" The young aspirants yielded to the claim of their chief; spontaneous acclamations again arose; the people flung themselves into each others' arms; while the clashing of swords and rolling of drums formed a wild and singular accompaniment to the enthusiasm and harmony of the scene.

The cure waved his hand. All was still. "Raise now your voices to the throne of grace—let your artless anthem bear on high the prayer of Christians, and the vows of patriots!" At these words the rural choir commenced a strain of rough and vigorous melody, in which the whole assemblage enthusiastically joined. The air was more martial than religious, and an unpremeditated pen had hastily adapted to it some stanzas, which appeared appropriate. They were as follows:—

I.

Why linger we here, when the tocsin afar
Through our villages rings?—let us on to the war:
Let us on, ere the false one write shame on our crest,
To the battle, VENDEANS—our banner is blest!

II.

Proud bearer, whose task is to guard it from stain,
Wave high the white symbol, and lead to the plain:
There be regicide cheeks that shall vie with its white,
As its tricolor rival sinks down in the fight.

III.

Let them come when they list, in their rebel array,
We have hearts for the onset, and swords for the fray:
For our homes and our altars to vengeance we spring,
And God shall be with us, for country and king.

IV.

Lead on, gallant bearer! high blessing and vow
Have been breathed on our banner—why linger we now?
Our weapons are out, and the scabbards flung by,
And we swear, by that standard, to conquer or die.

The effect of this chant, if not its harmony, was greatly increased by being joined in by the whole assembly. The untutored crash of such a strain was stunning, but impressive. When the last sounds ceased to reverberate, the cure again shortly addressed the crowd. His looks were once more changed—his eyes were filled with tears. His voice faltered as he pronounced the benediction. His accents

were those of tenderness and love, such as a fond father would utter when separating from a favorite child. He had before raised their minds to the highest pitch of exaltation, he now melted their hearts. He told them to be merciful, as he knew they would be brave; and labored to convince them that true courage was ever blended with humanity. He then cast over them the purifying water, symbolic of the holy dew of righteousness; and finally bade them farewell, as, headed by the seigneur, they sallied from the church; and the last words uttered by his almost exhausted voice, were, "March firmly, my children—the God of battles guides and guards you!"

The crowd rushed past Jeannette without perceiving her, and almost unperceived. Her whole attention was rivited on the interesting being whose fervid eloquence had chained her to the spot. She saw him at last sink down upon a bench, as the last stragglers quitted the church. Two or three attendants remained with him, and with upturned eyes and quivering lips he seemed to murmur the remains of an unfinished prayer. Jeannette turned towards home, where, she began to recollect, she would be anxiously expected. As she descended the sloping ground, she looked around her. The signal fires had almost all burned out. Here and there an occasional burst of flame told that the latest was expiring, and in some places a mass of glowing embers relieved the sombre shades. As she paused an instant at the foot of the hillock, she turned towards the church. The door was on the point of being closed, and the stream of light shut from her. There was no one near—all seemed desolate. The women of the village had, together with those who followed their husbands and fathers from the country, almost all set out in mournful escort to the departing warriors. A glimmering light from a few of the cottages told that old age or infirmity kept watch within. As Jeannette reached her home, her own little beacon was the only perceivable object, and nothing was to be heard but the distant trampling of the fast-going crowd, and the savage yet thrilling strains of their loud-sung chorus.

But I must pass over the details of this portentous night, nor dwell upon topics of distress, so often and so well described. From this moment no sounds of joy were heard in the once happy village, if we except the shouts of occasional triumph, resembling tiger-yellings more than tones of natural delight. The church bell no more rung out for prayers; its tolling now announced but blood and battle. The sports and labors of the fields were abandoned for their fiercer pursuits. Training, exercising, marching, occupied the young men in their occasional relaxations from combat, and the old inhabitants had no heart for industry. The cheerful Sunday ball no longer called the lasses to its innocent enjoyment. A care-worn expression hung on every face, and haggard looks gave evidence of sleepless nights and agitated hearts. Each day was big with new events; some fresh encounter, some impending danger, some hard-earned victory. Many a gallant youth of the village lay unburied on a distant battle-field; and others, after every action, returned to die—wounded and worn down. The women took various parts in these afflicting scenes. They were prohibited from following the Vendean

armies, and therefore the great body remained; and performed all the duties of guard-mounting and patrolling, like experienced soldiers. But many, disguised as men, girded on swords and mingled in the ranks, leaving their aged parents or their infants to the care of the feeble or the timorous who staid behind. Our heroine was one of the latter, for she possessed a tender, and even weak, nature; but she was eminently useful in the natural occupations of her sex. The church had been converted into a hospital, and under the directions of the worthy cure, and a surgeon appointed to the charge, it was soon considered as one of the chief depots for the victims of war. The principal hospital of La Vendee was at St. Laurent a town on the river Sevre, at a considerable distance from our village, and there was the chief rendezvous of the *Sœurs de Charité*, that sublime association, whose virtues half compensate for the folly or the vice of other orders, wearing the semblance of religion. Thus deprived of the services of the sisterhood, the women of the village were obliged to supply those offices, to the performance of which the former were wholly consecrated. The hearts of the female peasants readily prompted them to the arduous undertaking; and that knowledge of the simple medicines of nature, and, above all that benevolence of disposition so general among this class in France, fitted them well for the fulfilment of such duties.

The secluded situation of the village spared it for some time from the actual presence of either army. It lay far from the high-road, and was only resorted to for forage and recruits. But soon the wide-spreading force of the Republican arms drove the gallant warriors of La Vendee to the most remote and difficult positions. The village became the head-quarters of one of the retreating bodies of royalists, and presented a scene quite novel to its remaining inhabitants. Cannons, baggage-waggons, and cavalry continually moving through the road; drums and trumpets ever sounding; constant parades; warlike accoutrements filling every corner and crevice of the cottages; soldiers, if we may so call the untrained bands of Vendean, leaning across the doors and windows, sleeping on the benches before them, or lounging in strange groups at corners. Slaughtering of cattle to supply the messes; the gardens trampled on, and laid waste by marauders—in short, all the bustle and misfortune of an ill regulated military possession. The seigneur was one of those who, having escaped death in several desperate encounters, had reached again his own roof, to enjoy awhile the scanty repose which anxiety allowed him. The general commanding, with his staff, was of course lodged in the chateau, and the reputation of Jeannette procured her the appointment of washerwoman to the whole establishment. This gave her ample employment night and day, but being well recompensed for her trouble, she did not grudge it; and for some weeks she prudently hoarded up all the money she received, to be at hand in case of an emergency.

The parties which, from time to time, went out on scattered expeditions, brought back (but not often) occasional prisoners to the village. At the general assemblage of the Vendean armies, held some time before at Chollet, it was determined that no quarter should be

given; and the shocking nature of the subsequent conflicts rarely allowed the infringement of the order. The few prisoners spared were solely for the purpose of obtaining information, and these wretches were generally reserved for a miserable fate. In relation to them every gentle feeling seemed commonly stifled, and a principle of terrible retaliation governed their exasperated foes. Dragged along, bleeding and exhausted, they used to enter the village more dead than alive; and, after their examination before the chiefs, they were cast into some deserted cottage or loathsome outhouse, converted into a prison, often to expire of disease and neglect. But many a heart bled silently for their sorrows; compassion even here triumphed over the excitement of the darker passions; and some of these unfortunates were spared to repay their preservers' bounty, and rescue human nature from unlimited reproach.

CHAPTER III.

One night, as Jeannette was busily employed in preparing some linen, to be delivered at the chateau on the following day, a gentle knocking at the outer door aroused her from her work. She raised the latch unhesitatingly, knowing that the village was occupied by friends; but the object which presented itself made her start back affrighted. It was a soldier in the Republican uniform. He wore the national cockade, but no more dangerous symbol of his profession or opinions. He was unarmed. His face was pale, and an open wound upon his forehead, with the clotted blood which had trickled from it, increased the ghastliness of his hue. One arm was bound with a coarse handkerchief, and supported by his cravat, converted into a sling. He had neither shoes nor stockings. His garments were torn in several places, and covered with dust and mire. He was altogether a miserable figure. He addressed Jeannette in a hurried, yet insinuating tone, and entreated her to admit him, and shut the door. She did so, for there was something in his look and manner that disarmed her of her fears. The stranger was young, and, notwithstanding his wretched plight, the indelible traits of beauty were stamped upon his countenance. There was, too, a touching softness in his voice; and his forlorn and perilous condition awoke at once that pity, so hard to be distinguished from a feeling still more tender. Jeannette was a steady royalist, and till now had instinctively shuddered with dread at the bare thought of a republican; but a sudden chill seemed to creep across those loyal antipathies which were wont to flow so warmly; and, I fear, I am reduced to the dilemma of confessing the plain truth with regard to our poor heroine. Yes, the

long-stagnant sensibilities of her nature were at once let loose—the thousand kind emotions of her heart, so often lavished in indeterminate yet amiable profusion, were in a moment fixed, brought home, concentrated—and she experienced all that instant rush of inspiration which is defined, most fitly, by the pithy phrase of “Love at first sight.”

La Coste, for so the stranger named himself, shortly informed Jeannette that he was one of the enemy that day brought a prisoner to the village from a neighboring skirmish; that he had been, in the afternoon, examined by the royalist officers, and afterwards thrust into a wretched hovel, with all the misery, but none of the security, of confinement. He had just availed himself of the carelessness of his guards to effect his escape, when, in search of some hiding-place, he was attracted by the light in the cottage window. He knew, he said, that he ran a fearful risk; but seeing through the lattice that there was only a woman, and that a young one (he could not force himself to say a pretty, or even an interesting one—words so common,) he relied on her compassion overpowering every feeling of harshness or hostility. He intreated her to protect and shelter him—and she did so. There was no time for hesitation, had she even been disposed to hesitate; but of this it will be believed she never thought, for most of my readers will possibly be able to testify, that when people surrender the heart they are seldom difficult as to yielding up the house. She led him softly to her little closet, and insisted on his occupying her bed. Should any one be disposed to shrink from this arrangement, I must beg them simply to consider that Jeannette was a peasant girl, not versed in nice distinctions—innocent and ugly—and also that this was a case of life and death. She warmed some water, and washed his wounded forehead and his lacerated feet. Her hospital experience was now of infinite value, and she exercised it with a tender alacrity, which she was astonished to acknowledge greater than usual. She next bound up his contused arm, and gave him, from the little store of the cottage, something to eat, with a bottle of wine, all of which he readily disposed of. Jeannette had seen enough of wounds to know that his were but slight; and, though not quite conversant in theories of animal appetite, she felt there was not much danger to be apprehended from the specimen which his exhibited. Neither was she alarmed to observe some symptoms of drowsiness display themselves in her patient's visage. She begged of him to give free indulgence to his evident inclination to repose. Prompted for a time by his expiring *politesse*, he made some faint objections; but yielding at length to her solicitations and his own desires, he nodded an involuntary assent, and closed his eyes on such a flagrant breach of gallantry. Jeannette had thus the satisfaction of seeing him sink into a profound sleep, and she then took possession of an arm chair by the kitchen fire, where she sat the whole night ruminating on the oddness of her adventure, and forming plans for escaping from its dangers.

Her cogitations were serious and embarrassing, but mixed with them was a certain buoyancy of feeling wholly unaccountable to its possessor. She felt that in harboring an enemy to the cause, she

was doing it an injury—that in concealing a man, particularly as he was concealed, she was committing, at least, an indiscretion. She knew that in case of discovery she should certainly incur high censure; perhaps disgrace and punishment. But she seemed to rise superior to party feeling, to prudery, and even to prudence; and an inward whispering seemed still to tell her that her fears were visionary, and her risk chimerical. She wondered what it could be, yet scarcely liked to ask herself what it was. She felt an awkwardness she knew not why, and yet it was so pleasing she was unwilling to wish herself quite at ease. She turned the matter over in every way; viewed her situation in all its aspects, and found it always to preserve the same face, like portraits, which, observed from whatever position we will, seem ever to fix their eyes full upon ours. It was thus that on every account she felt bound to save the young man. She resolved to do so at all hazards, and as soon as the first glimmer of morning light broke through the lattice, she approached the closet to tell him so. He still slept. Jeannette wished him to awake, and strove to persuade herself that it was merely for his safety she wished it; but she longed notwithstanding for the soft expression of his gratitude, which she knew would follow her communication, for his gentle accents were still tingling in her ears. She could not, however, summon up the courage to disturb him, and she retreated softly to the kitchen again. The lark was by this time winging his heavenward flight, and the chirping of the less aspiring songsters called Jeannette to the window. As she opened it, the breeze rushed in upon her fresh and familiar; and she thought that, in spite of her peril, she never felt so light and happy. She looked out revived and joyous, but her heart's blood seemed suddenly congealed when she saw approaching from one of the opposite cottages three or four armed men, whom she rightly conjectured to be a part of the evening guard in search of their fugitive foe. She hurried into his hiding-place, and not having the power of utterance, she shook him into sensibility, and a sense of his danger. Time was precious; security was the first consideration; and in order to do it he was obliged to submit to the unpleasant necessity of being covered with a huge heap of the unwashed linen, which Jeannette threw carelessly over him, leaving but a small opening at the back part of the bed, through which he had just room to breathe. This being arranged, she spread her table in the kitchen for the apparent completion of her task; and had just renewed it, when the door was unceremoniously burst open by the dreaded visitors. We must not, however, mistake their motives, nor imagine from their conduct any thing derogatory to the respectability of our cottage friends. Suspicion never ventured to light upon their loyalty, but their well known humanity caused them to be doubted on this occasion. To the opening interrogations Jeannette could make no reply. She trembled in visible agitation; and the rude remarks of her inquisitors awakened the old woman in the room within. Her thoughts, which had been latterly in constant movement, and turned, unceasingly on the subject of revolutionary alarms, immediately pictured, in the rough figures that now entered her chamber, the living apparitions

which her imagination had conjured up. Her consequent scream came like confirmation to the suspicions of the soldiers. They therefore proceeded with increased asperity to announce to the dame the nature of their visit, and to commence without delay its business. When she rightly understood their meaning, and her own safety, her feelings took a new turn, and rage usurped the throne just vacated by terror. She gave vent to her resentment in a shower of such reproaches as weak people in their anger are wont to lavish on those friends from whom they dread no retaliation. The soldiers smiled, and continued their search. They poked their heads into every nook sufficiently capacious, and their bayonets where those could not enter. The very sanctuary of the old lady's repose was violated by this pointed scrutiny; and when satisfied that no living thing lurked beneath the blankets, they proceeded to the closet of Jeannette to repeat the operation. The suffocating heap which covered her bed was just about to be submitted to the like examination, when the old woman fiercely interposed, exclaiming it was the general's linen, in time to save the heap from perforation, and the whole secret from discovery. Jeannette stood silent and almost senseless, being unblest by the force of mind which enables us to overcome our feelings, or the power of deception which teaches us to conceal them. The old woman, taking advantage of the hesitation which her last appeal had produced, assumed a higher tone, and threatened punishment for the affront thus inflicted on one of the functionaries (that was the washerwoman) of the right (that was the royal) cause. The soldiers, brought to their recollection, began to look like agents who have exceeded their powers. They gave one secret, searching glance at the old woman, and another at Jeannette. The demeanor of the first disarmed suspicion, while the looks of the latter defied it. The old woman's countenance beamed indignant innocence; and he must have been indeed a clever physiognomist who could have discovered a secret in our heroine's illegible face. Baffled in their object, the party retired, and before night the pursuit was abandoned for the observance of more material concerns. The approach of the republican army, in all the flush of victory, was this very day announced at quarters; and the village had been fixed on in a council of the chiefs, as the spot most favorable to the junction of the royalist divisions, for the purpose of risking a general action. Great bustle of course prevailed, and the minds of all being occupied in anticipations of the coming contest, Jeannette was for several days left unmolested to the discharge of her duties towards her interesting invalid. I pass over the detail of the many difficulties she experienced in concealing him from her grandmother's observation. These, however, she surmounted with an address surprising to herself, proportioned to her former ignorance in the science of hypocrisy; and which gave La Coste a notion of her cleverness, exaggerated by the contrast of his first impressions. He had a less arduous, but more wearisome, part to play;—to suffer that state of demi-existence where the body is obliged to lie passive and inert, while every energy of the mind gains new activity, and the brain seems wearing out the framework that contains its busy machinery. He lay for most part of the

day in bed, nearly smothered by the weight of clothes which his considerate protectress took care to heap upon him. When cramped and exhausted almost beyond endurance, he used occasionally to creep from his concealment, and screened by some linen, which Jeannette hung before the door and window as if to dry, he snatched the indulgence of a few stooping, distorted turns up and down the closet (which was three good paces in length,) and then stole again into his covert. At night his situation was more tolerable. The weather at the time was happily dark and clouded, and he might with safety sit at the open casement breathing freshness of the midnight air; and he sometimes even stepped boldly out into the little garden, unable to resist his desire to tread the earth once more, and feel himself half free.

Dread of discovery, which would not only bring down certain ruin upon him, but as infallibly compromise the safety of his preserver, obliged him to retrench this only solace of his imprisonment. Returning into his closet, he was always sure to perceive the little table covered with an ample supply for that appetite which convalescence every day increased, and over which confinement exercised its control in vain. He had no longer any bodily ill, for the application of Jeannette's simple remedies had already removed every obstacle to the recovery of his strength. The consequent consumption of bread, cheese, and eggs, was enormous, and perfectly incomprehensible to the old woman, who saw, of a morning, a complete clearance of as much food as used to serve for three or four days provision for herself and Jeannette. The latter had been ever a remarkably poor eater, but she all of a sudden proclaimed a hunger that verged upon voracity; and, what was still more extraordinary to the grandmother, it was at night that this miraculous increase of appetite was principally displayed. To sausages, Jeannette, from her earliest moments, had a decided antipathy. The old woman well remembered that when the poor girl, at six months old, had lost her mother, and with her the natural nourishment of her age, a tender-hearted neighbor who stood by, in the act of eating one of those savory preparations of country cookery, would have soothed the crying infant by a morsel of the tempting relish; but the shock inflicted upon the palate of the child was so severe; that she never could overcome the dislike—yet of a dozen of these delicacies, now presented to her grandmother by a neighbor, only two were suffered to proceed on their original destination. Jeannette arrested the progress of the others. She put in her claim to their possession, and seemed resolved, by this sudden affection, to atone for her long indulged hostility. Wine, too, which she had before now rarely tasted, became a matter of absolute necessity. She proclaimed herself in daily want of a portion, more than had formerly served her for a month. The fact was, that she was afraid to take the unusual step of seeking abroad those supplies which her patient required, and preferred exciting the astonishment of her aged relative to arousing the suspicion of her younger friends. She endeavored to persuade the former that her marvellous appetite was the natural effect of her increased exertions; but this did not satisfy the old woman. Convinced that some miracle was working,

she vainly exerted her conjectural faculties to explain it away; finding, at length, that it was too vague for her solution she had recourse to her saint, whose name I am ignorant of, and whose power or inclination was in this case, insufficient. Invocation, prayer and perseverance were fruitlessly essayed for a whole week. The mysterious secret remained unsolved, and the piety of the dame, like that of many another pretending to more sanctity, being weakened by the want of immediate satisfaction, she abandoned her reliance on supernatural power, and was on the point of turning it into the channel of mortal sagacity—in fact, she had just resolved to consult the cure on the question, when the rapid march of events removed the necessity, as well as the opportunity, for so doing. In the meantime Jeannette employed herself in unceasing efforts for the advantage and comfort of her protegee. She supplied him with a pair of shoes, the best she had of two pair; and let not the idolator of female symmetry be agonised to learn, that they fitted him well, but rather loosely for the foot of the young grenadier did not measure the tenth part of an inch more in length, and considerably less than that in breadth, than the mark imprinted by our heroine in the mud, when she paced the winter pathways of the village. She supplied him, too, with stockings from her scanty store (but I am not prepared to treat of the mystery of *their* proportion.) She employed herself at night in changing the whole arrangement of his dress. She cut his military coat into the jacket of a simple civilian; stripped it of its warlike ornaments, and turned the skirts into a cap. For ten nights she never slept but in the great chair before mentioned, and she was beginning to show evident marks of fatigue and anxiety. Her patient observed this, and he felt deeply both her kindness and her suffering. He bounded with ardor to be once more in action; he considered his concealment a disgrace, and burned with shame at the thought of being discovered by his comrades, on the triumphant entry which he anticipated, hidden under a bundle of foul linnen!

The preparations for the battle were now coming to a close. The royalist position was strengthened by every possible means. Redoubts were constructed on the rising grounds, trees felled in the plains below; the rivulets dammed up, to let loose as the enemy advanced:—nothing, in short was left undone to second the bravery of the peasant troops, whose courage was unabated, but whose tactics had gained nothing by experience. Daily skirmishes took place, and random discharges of artillery rolled their echoes round the village.

The troops on either side could with difficulty be restrained. Reinforcements thronged to the royalist lines; and the victorious enemy, approaching from all quarters, had ranged his battalions close to the front of their redoubts. The tomorrow of a gloomy evening was fixed on for the attack. The manoeuvres of the republicans gave certain intimation of this, and the dawn was ardently watched for by their daring and desperate opponents. Every movement was known in the village, and reported accurately by Jeannette to the inquiring La Coste. His resolution may be anticipated. He was determined, at all hazards, to quit his concealment, and make an effort to join the republican army.

Jeannette made no opposition: she knew it would be vain; and the certainty of losing him deprived her of all power of argument or entreaty. She passively assented to his plans. A leaden apathy seemed to weigh her down. As evening closed in, her oppression increased, mixed with a breathless anxiety of which she knew not the meaning. Who can define it; yet who has not felt it at the heavy hour of hopeless separation?

It became quite dark, and a heavy rain poured down as if expressly to increase the facilities for the escape. The old woman had retired to bed, in the hope of snatching some repose from the constant agitation which preyed upon her. Jeannette had prepared a little repast for La Coste, but when she offered him to eat he could not touch it! This sudden failure of appetite was no trifling proof of sensibility. Jeannette knew better than any one how to measure its force; she felt it fully, and could not restrain her tears. But she turned from him, lest he should observe or be infected by her weakness. She opened a drawer, and taking from it a small leather purse, which contained all the earnings of her several weeks' work, she put it into his hands. He refused it by every declining gesture, for he was unable to speak; but she insisted by entreaties, silent but yet so powerful, that he at last consented, and placed it in his bosom, saying, "Until tomorrow, since it must be so." Had he known it to have contained the whole of her little store, would he, on any terms, have been persuaded to accept it, or have suffered any hope, however sanguine, to have made him risk the contingencies of the morrow? I think not.

The final moment of parting was at hand. La Coste saw clearly the workings of Jeannette's despair. They pained him, but he had no reciprocity in her pangs. He was more and more impatient to depart, for he felt not that desperate enjoyment which leads the lover to cling on in agonized procrastination to the misery of such a moment. Jeannette was not so utterly involved in her own sorrow as not to see the actual extent of his, or the delicacy which still kept him near her. She made one struggle: she opened the little window. He eagerly caught the permission thus given him, and stepped out into the garden. She pointed once more to the path leading to the wood, where he trusted to find an opening beyond the extent of the royalist lines. He pressed her chill hands to his lips, and tenderly uttered, "God bless you, my preserver! expect me tomorrow." She faintly whispered, "Adieu!" and in a moment he was lost in the darkness. The pattering of the rain drowned even the sound of his footsteps. The shock was instantaneous, and poor Jeannette sunk back in a chair, quite stupefied with sorrow.

The dawn was fearfully ushered in. Cannon and musketry heralded its earliest beam: Jeannette started at the first discharge, from a state of several hours unconsciousness. She knew not if she had slept, for no dream had left its shadowy trace on the monotony of her repose. She had been, perhaps, in waking insensibility—no memory of her thoughts remained to mark the hours. All that she recollected was the parting movement of La Coste, and his gentle murmur, "Expect me tomorrow." Her first impulse was to spring forward to the window, as in hope to catch another glimpse of his retreating form—but the flash of morning light just breaking o'er the heavens, struck her back in shocked amaze-

ment. How had the night elapsed, and where was *he*? The thundering roll of the artillery gave reply, and the reality rushed upon her with that overpowering abruptness which seems to stifle thought, while, at the same time, it gives new nerve to the mind's energies. She flung open the cottage door, and, as if every feeling was absorbed, in one great object of discovering *him*, she ran at her utmost speed to the nearest rising ground in the direction of the battle. As she reached the summit of the little hill, shouts of triumph broke upon her. She saw the women of the royalists army, with frantic yet joyous gestures, waving handkerchiefs, dancing, singing; while, in a cloud of smoke below, she distinguished the great body of the Vendéans rushing on the republican lines, and sweeping everything before them. Their impetuosity had led them to anticipate the meditated attack, and scarcely had the opening roar of the redoubts commenced, when they precipitated themselves from their position with a movement as unlooked for as it was resistless. The chiefs knowing how to profit by this impulse—and which was, indeed, their only knowledge in the art of war—threw themselves before the troops with their accustomed gallantry. The republicans kept up awhile a murderous fire, but they were every where broken. The advantages of one side, and the disorder of the other, were, however, but temporary. The courage of the republicans was unshaken, and after a little breathing time given by a moment's check which their violent antagonists experienced, they turned round with all the steadiness of veterans, and changed the fortune of the day. The Vendéans fell back, but not in flight. They opposed no well-trained masses to the advance of the enemy's columns, but flinging themselves behind the hedges in scattered groups, they forced their opponents to attack them in detail, and the fight became a bloody struggle of man to man. When personal prowess is the sole resource between foes equally brave, and alike enthusiastic in their respective causes, it is numbers alone which can be expected to decide the contest. This preponderance was at the side of the republicans, but their superiority in tactics was here of no avail. Their generals even were obliged to abandon their knowledge of manœuvring, of discipline, and command, to combat foot to foot with some sturdy peasant, who forced them, by his way of fighting, to acknowledge his equality. The Vendéans at length abandoned the valley, and as they more rapidly retreated up the rising ground, the panic-struck females fled towards the village, uttering the most fearful shrieks. One alone remained; it was Jeannette, who stood in silent and awful observation. From the moment in which she had reached the summit of the hillock, her eyes had been fixed on the scene of blood below her. Fear never entered her heart; its whole emotions seemed changed from their usual course. She heard the angry voice of the combat—the whistling of the bullets—the clash of swords—the groans of anguish, without any of those heart-sinking sensations which used to be excited by the most trifling sounds of danger or suffering. The only tone which seemed to impress itself upon her was the parting murmur of *La Coste*. "Expect me tomorrow," was ever self-repeated in her brain; and in spite of improbability, of danger, and even of death, she clung with unshaken certainty to the fulfilment of the expectation. Her vacant stare looked for him in every group of desperate combatants. It rested the longest wherever the deadliest feats of valor were acting—for something told her that there should be his

place. When a republican soldier fell to earth, she sickened with apprehension; but if one of her own party dropped under the blows of his antagonists, she felt on the contrary a sort of throb something quite different from pain. Jeanette, once or twice, during her terrible suspense, was startled and shocked at this state of feeling. She had not, however, time to enter into its analysis, nor have I.

A general and overwhelming charge, which the opening nature of the upland ground allowed the republicans to make, carried the broken parties of the Vendéans before it, as a shattered herd borne along by the flooding of some mighty stream. The mingled mass rolled onwards towards the village, and Jeannette was hurried with it, stunned and almost stifled by the noise and pressure of the throng. The Vendéans seemed actuated by a single soul, for each individual, as he extricated himself from the multitude, made towards the church, as if in search of safety from its protection, or in determination to die under its venerated walls. The body of the building was already filled to suffocation, for the cure was within, celebrating mass to a mixed and melancholy congregation of distracted women, wounded and desperate soldiers, and those sick and fainting wretches who occupied their miserable beds in this hospital sanctuary. The little band of native warriors, headed by the seigneur, made a bold stand to save their village from the pollution of the foe, and allowed an opportunity to the great retreating body to form a deep and solid circle round the church. Bent there upon their knees, or stretched prostrate on the earth, they invoked the aid of Heaven, and filled with momentary enthusiasm, they rushed again to the fight in renewed and firmer resolution. But the numbers of the enemy forced back all resistance, and advancing into the village, they commenced their horrid system of warfare, by setting fire to the cottages in successive order. That of our heroine being the very first on the course of the rivulet running parallel with the road, was one of the first in flames. She saw the faggots placed around it—the smoke and the fire burst up. She shuddered; she would have screamed, but her voice seemed choking her in every effort to articulate; and as the door began to crackle in the blaze, she fancied she heard from within the faint murmur of a female voice! It might be so—for from that hour she never saw her grandmother, and she never knew her fate. The fragile frame-work of the rustic habitation was soon a blaze. The republicans rushed on through the fiery wreaths, and the shrieks of the women and children, with the deeper execrations of the furious villagers, rose up like the discordant yells which poets have imagined to burst from Pandemonium, and mixed themselves with the triumphant shouts of the fierce assailants. Every hope seemed lost to the Vendéans. They were borne backwards even beyond the church; and the foremost of the enemy, with sacrilegious hands, applied their torches to the consecrated walls. The crumbling wood-works, dried by the heats of a hundred summers, caught quickly the assailing flames. The horror-struck congregation set forth one tremendous cry, and precipitated themselves on the incendiaries without. The rush was terrific. The republicans offered no resistance, for the demonic passions of the day gave way to the natural

humanity of the French heart. They could not raise their weapons against the flying crowd, but saw them scatter across the fields without firing a single shot to increase the panic which impelled them.

At this instant the ceremony of the mass was finished. The cure had, with unruffled solemnity, performed its sacred mysteries, amidst all the appalling sounds which rose around him. He now descended the steps of the altar, and bearing aloft the chalice, containing the ingredients which the faith of such a being has almost the power to dignify into the reality of his sublimed imagining, he followed the impulse of the escaping concourse; and as the latest fugitive passed the wide-spreading blaze, he issued from the porch in all the majesty and might of holiness. He spoke not, but stopping for an instant, looked full upon the thousands of armed men who circled the little eminence. The effect was magical. The whole, as if struck by an electric pang, turned from him and fled. No voice was raised to stay them. No standard uplifted around which they might rally. All mingled in indiscriminate rout. The Vendéans saw this inexplicable scene. It appeared to them to exceed the possibilities of human influence, and they attributed the miracle to the immediate interposition of the deity. The thought darted through them like inspiration; and, following their chiefs, whose efforts to reanimate them had been unceasing, they rushed once more around the church. The cure advanced, surrounded by the flames which the enthusiasm of his ardent observers converted into a halo of celestial glory; and with the utmost energy which his feeble frame allowed, he sang the chorus of their battle song. The wide air rang with the congregated bursts from every individual voice, and the torrent poured onwards. The Vendéans were stopped at every step by heaps of their dead comrades, who had fallen on the enemy's advance; but the speed of their vengeance overtook its victims, and a horrid carnage ensued. Frightful as these scenes are in themselves, there are times when they borrow from circumstances a character of exaggerated atrocity—and this was one. When the business of death is wrested, in a measure, from the agents to which its infliction seems appropriate; when men consign the work of slaughter to feeble hands; when woman bears her part in the battle; and childhood sports among the bodies of the slain, and dabbles its innocent fingers in their blood.

The village was soon cleared of the hated intruders, but a strong reserve, posted on the heights by the wary and experienced Westermann, arrested again the advance of the Vendéans, and finally turned the scale of victory against them. Still, however, they pressed onwards; and foremost among the brave was the seigneur, who seemed actuated by the feeling, that courage on such ground, was his more peculiar privilege. He bore the banner in his left hand, and, with his sword, carved for himself a passage through the thickest of the fight. Jeannette, borne by the current of the crowd, saw him one instant separated by a circle of the enemy from his companions, and fighting with desperate valor. In the next, the white flag sunk below the heads of the combatants, and when her gaze again fixed upon its hapless bearer, she saw him carried towards the village in the arms of four of his own soldiers, mangled and lifeless.

With the death of their beloved chieftain, and the fall of the banner, seemed to sink the hearts of its supporters. Actual flight was incompatible with the valor of their officers—La Roche-Jacquelin, Lescure, de Marigny, Bonchamp, are names which warrant this assertion; but they nevertheless fell back, fighting step by step their bloody way. Jeannette, whose personal fears and hopes were merged in the general horrors around her, forgot all private feeling, and thought her heart would break at the contemplation of the universal misery. She put up some short irregular prayers, and experienced, what most of us have sometime or other felt, the ineptitude of stated and stately invocations to scenes of imminent alarm. Her whole thoughts seemed to turn towards the saintly man who in this hour appeared, by his profession as well as his virtues, to approach the nearest to that power in whom alone was hope for safety. She hurried to and fro across the battle field, and often—alas! how often—turned shuddering from the hacked and bleeding victims of the dreadful day; from the ferocious enemy howling forth his curses as he died; or the acquaintance or friend stiff in death, and consuming in the blaze of his own cottage. At length she caught a glimpse of the holy father, and flying over many a horrible impediment, she threw herself on her knees beside him, and sought to cover herself with the skirt of his mantle. He was bending over a wounded republican, and in the glow of piety administering the sacred rights of the church to the expiring sinner. He was surrounded by a heap of dead and dying. Several of the latter, of both parties, made straining efforts to crawl towards him. Some with piercing shrieks demanded his aid; while others, unable to articulate the wish, fixed their glazed looks upon him, as if the very beam of his eye poured consolation to their souls. The pressure of the enemy increased each moment, and a thickening shower of balls flew round the spot. Jeannette, forgetting in her fright the sacredness of his occupation, and the veneration with which she was wont to look upon the priest, flung her arms around him, and in an agony of agitation implored him to save her. He turned calmly round, recognized her, and pointing his finger to Heaven, just uttered "My child—" when his voice ceased, and falling from her faint embrace, he sunk to earth. Two bullets of a well-directed volley had pierced his breast, and forced the life-blood from his innocent heart. The warm stream covered the garments of Jeannette. She gazed a moment on his out-stretched body, and then ran in frantic agony towards the home where instinct seemed to point her steps.

CHAPTER IV.

Unhurt almost by miracle, she hurried through the scorched and suffocating air, in the direction of what was once the cottage. Its position alone enabled her to recognize it now, for not a half of the walls reared their blackened remains above the still-burning heap of rubbish. The garden was utterly destroyed. The vines which used to hang so gracefully above the door were now leafless and shrivelled; and the branches of the beautiful acacias, which had so long shaded the roof, parched, shrunk, and crackling in the column of smoke which half hid their deformity. Many other sad and striking contrasts to its former state were offered to the miserable girl by the present desolation of her only home. She paced its limited extent, and sought, amidst its ruins, for her old and helpless relative, but in vain. Not even a vestige of the homely furniture had escaped the flames—all was consumed. Jeannette, giving way to a burst of utter agony, covered her face with her hands and sank upon the smoking heap.

The clamor of the fight was gradually retiring. The still-prolonged struggle had left the village behind it, but many stragglers were flitting across the road, whose fierce and haggard looks might have suited the worst of the spirits of ill. Jeannette once more looked up, but not in hope. A mechanical movement, rather than an effort of the will, made her fix her gaze on the desolate scene around her. She had no longer aught to look for, for he alone on whom her thoughts could dare to rest had either fallen in the fray or forgotten her. What, then, was her astonishment to see a republican soldier following the course of the little rivulet, as if its windings were his guide towards her, while, as he approached her, he pronounced her name! The voice was weak and hoarse—speaking exhaustion and pain. She thought she had never before heard it, yet whose could it be but *his*? She sprang upon her feet, and ran to meet him. When he perceived her, he increased his speed, and she saw, in his elastic bound, the ardor and animation of youth. He was too distant to allow of her distinguishing his features, but the image stamped upon her memory filled up the interval between her and him. She saw that he held his hand above his head, as if to mark to her that it contained some object destined for her. She involuntarily expanded her arms as though he were close to her embrace, when at the instant of his springing across the rivulet to cut off a turn which retarded his approach, a party of three or four Vendéans, retreating to the wood, discharged their carbines at him, and he fell dead into the stream. Jeannette heard the report of the volley, and saw him fall, but could not—would not believe he was to rise no more. She flew to the spot. He had fallen on his face. His arms were extended before him on the bank; one hand holding firmly his musket, and the other Jeannette's leathern purse. She shuddered with a mixture of every horrible sensation as she gazed on this testimony of honor, feeling, and, she would have thought, affection. But

even in this hour of anguish, reason made itself heard to check the latter belief. Scarcely conscious of what she did, she stepped into the stream and raised the body up. At this moment the murderers reached the spot; and in defiance of her entreaties, shrieks and struggles, two of them forced her with them to the wood, while another rifled the body, and then flung it again indignantly into the water.

Arrived at the skirts of the wood, Jeannette cast back one glance upon the fatal spot where all her hopes were buried. She distinguished nothing but the smoke curling above the cottage ruins, and the more distant blaze uprising from the church. Just as her conductors hurried her into the concealment of the trees, the roof of the sacred building fell in with a loud crash, and the yell which came down the wind announced the ferocious joy of its destroyers.

The contents of the purse were soon divided. Jeannette was offered some of her own money, but she shrank back from its acceptance. All that she asked for and procured was the black silk handkerchief, which she thought she recognized and a scrap of paper, on which something was written unintelligible to Jeannette as well as the group around her. She felt, however, a tender expectation of finding some one capable of reading its contents; she knew not that La Coste possessed the accomplishment of being able to write. He had never said he did. But in her present wretchedness she dwelt on this proof of his modesty with a comfortless kind of satisfaction, of the same nature with that which she felt in the possession of this scrap of his original composition—for other she never thought it. She placed the paper in her bosom, and tied the handkerchief round her throbbing head. For some hours she wandered in the skirts of the wood, with her companions, and heard with indifference the various lamentations and threats of vengeance muttered against their victors.

The evening fell at length. She took advantage of the dusk, left her companions, and emerged from the thicket. She soon arrived on the banks of the rivulet. She hastened towards the memorable spot. Bodies were scattered there in sad abundance, but it was impossible to distinguish any one amongst the heaps. The stream rippled redly on;—faint groans issued from the dying wretches washed by its sanguined waters—no other sounds were heard except the moaning of the evening breeze, and the broken murmurs of an impatient and gloomy band of republicans, to whom had devolved the task of burying their fallen friends. They were busily at work, and the echo of their spades, striking the branches of trees, stones, and other obstacles fell upon the ear of Jeannette as a fitting consummation of this most terrible day. She tottered towards the ruins of the cottage. Faint, and sick at heart, she had just strength enough left to reach the spot, when she fell down exhausted, and as she thought expiring.

She lived, however, to see other, and, perhaps, more wretched days; for with the morrow came that loneliness of heart which follows the loss of happiness, unsupported by the stimulating anguish, whose violence seems to lift us above the reach of despair. The hour of earliest suffering is certainly not that of greatest sorrow—for

in the first the intensity of the feeling weakens its effect. The heart-strings seem drawn up in defiance of actual pain; and the shock falls with such a general pressure, that no individual sensation has power to attribute it to itself. But when the mind relaxes from this tension, and the memory can take in the blessings we have lost, as well as the infliction which destroyed them, then comes the reign of indescribable distress; when the heart seems balanced in a cold and desolate void—as if no blood ran through it, and no fibre touched it. Such were the waking feelings of Jeannette when the hot sunbeams shone upon her wretchedness. Parched, cold, feverish, and forlorn, she raised her heavy head to meet the light. She left her retreat, and turning to the rivulet, would have quenched in its quiet stream the fire which seemed consuming her. Arrived at the brink, she shrank back in unspeakable disgust on seeing the water still tinged with the blood of the preceding day. She next turned her steps towards the village.—The village! It existed, alas! no more. All traces of resemblance were gone by. The houses were every one destroyed; whole gardens rooted up; trees cut into pieces by the shots; branches shorn away and scattered on the ground; the very earth transformed into a monument of ruin; the road and the field furrowed alike into one mass of mud, and strewn with the yet unburied bodies of the Vendéans, and all the accumulated fragments of the battle. No living thing relieved the desolation, or bore witness to the dreary scene.

Jeannette proceeded in the direction of the chateau, which lay at the further extremity of the village. She soon perceived it, and to her utter surprise it was entire. Smoke issued from its tall, dark chimneys, but was the token of good cheer, and not destruction. As she approached, a ruffian republican rushed out, and in a ferocious tone demanded what she wanted. She nearly sunk to the earth, and lost all use of speech. He again fiercely addressed her, and placed his bayonet to her breast, with horrid imprecations asking of what party she was. Every sense of recollection left the affrighted girl, who, almost unconscious of his question, muttered instinctively the word most familiar to her lips and feelings, "Royalist." He did not kill her, but seizing her by the hair, he dragged her into the chateau, where a small guard had been left by the victors, the great body of whom had directed their march to Nantes, while a single division was detached in pursuit of the broken and dispersed Vendéans. The officer in command of the chateau, hearing the charge against Jeannette, ordered her to be thrust into a hovel in the court yard, where a miserable remnant of the villagers were confined.

When she saw herself among these old friends of her happiest days, and now the companions of her ruin, a something like pleasure seemed to break upon her. They had, however, little to communicate but sighs, tears, and lamentations. A night was passed in this monotony of woe. They were furnished with a scanty supply of coarse food, which served but to irritate the hunger that, in spite of romance, will force its way through the deepest suffering.

At day-break they were all summoned out to the court-yard, pre-

pared for any fate, and indifferent to all. But Death had not yet closed with his victims. They were brought forth, and having each received a portion of bread, they set off, escorted by the guard of the chateau, on the road to Nantes, which was, they were informed, their final destination. They proceeded silently and sullenly on. As they quitted the long-loved spot for ever, the villagers, with simultaneous movement turned round their heads. They saw enough in one glance to satisfy their despair. To complete the picture of the preceding days, the chateau was now in flames, its relentless conquerors have resolved to leave no vestige of the village undestroyed. It was thus these warriors marched through their native land—desolation the monument of their victories, and a desert the resting-place of their renown.

As the party proceeded, the track of their precursors was easily distinguished. Ruins, havoc, and death, choked up the passage of the roads; but not one surviving wretch was found to tell the fate of his fellows. They emerged at length, from the woody fastnesses of La Vendée, and, reaching the gently winding Sevre, the fine varieties, of nature burst, for the first time on the prisoners, but not in beauty. Their woe-worn hearts could ill-participate in the enjoyment of such scenes; and what is loveliness if sympathy responds not to its charms! How vainly may the richest view expand itself before our gaze—how ineffectual are the grandest exhibitions of combined magnificence, if the soul is unattuned by inward preparation! We call this landscape beautiful, or that sublime—phrases of form, conventional terms agreed on between men—but through the widest range of loveliness or splendor, we find nothing with power to stamp its meaning on us if our susceptibilities are not in unison to receive the impress. Such was not the case with the unhappy outcasts whose route I am now following.

To mark the various feelings of their lone and agitated minds would be a sad and difficult task. With my hapless heroine, every thought was paralysed and plunged in dead indifference. For her the Loire, upon whose banks the third day brought them, flowed unobserved. The acclivities by which it is bordered, with all their scattered ornaments—castles, abbeys, villages and hamlets uprose around her, but in vain. The frequent vineyards, in their picturesque positions, planted on the steep rocks which hang over the water's edge; and showing often from their mass of foliage the habitation of the vigneron hewn in the breast of the calcareous cliff—all these sweet combinations were lost upon the desolate Jeannette.

Another night, and Nantes displayed itself to view. Could any thing have awakened the sympathy of the suffering girl, it had surely been the first glance of this beautiful town; stretching its broad fronts along the banks of the river; its fine quay, with a double colonnade of noble trees, skirting the wide and transparent stream on the surface of which islands of verdure fling their reflected shadows, and give to the water an apparent depth, which, however, it does not possess. But the very shallowness of this charming river is to me one of its chief beauties; and I love to look on its pebbly bed and see, in the summer season, the scattered sand-banks rising over

its rippling wave, and covered with basking groups of cattle, or sportive bands of children.

The mournful troop marched on. During their long route, the roughness of their escort seemed to be hushed by the influence of pity. The prisoners were allowed to totter on, without any aggravation from insult or ill-treatment; but as they now approached the grand depot of crime and cruelty, their conductors seemed to gain a new ferocity in the anticipation of that they went to meet. Their approach to the barriers was quickly announced through the faux-bourg, and a crowd of idle ruffians came out to pour their bitter and terrific welcomes. Jeannette was nearly drooping from exhaustion, covered with dust, and at no time of a prepossessing appearance. Her figure was singled out as the particular mark of ribaldry and sarcasm. She bore it all, however, with a forbearance not likely to be shaken, for it was founded on despair.

It was noon when she and her friends, the very refuse of wretchedness, arrived at the public square of Nantes, on their way to the prison to which they were destined. The accumulated crowd seemed to gather fury as their numbers increased; bad passions gaining strength from association, as virtuous feeling thrives in singleness and solitude. The dissuasions and efforts of the guards could hardly protect the poor Vendéans from the violence of the rabble. The hootings and reviling heaped on them drew additional tormentors from every street they passed; but, in justice to the humane and respectable portion of the population, it should be stated, that it was *but* the rabble who joined in this and similar persecutions. The town of Nantes may, in this instance, be fairly taken as an epitome of all France; for in the one, as well as the other, it was the dregs of society who stamped by their atrocities the character of infamy which has attached itself to both. They got the upper hand, and used it. May the terrible truth carry down its moral with it!

As the prisoners were hurried along, many a stifled sigh was given for their fate; many a silent prayer put up in their behalf, and even some remonstrances offered in their favor. But all was alike unknown by Jeannette and her companions; nor was any thing capable of arresting their attention, till, rising above the heads of the multitude, one object struck upon their sight, and for their first time broke their lethargy. It was the guillotine! not silent, motionless, unoccupied—but at work in all the fulness of its terrors, and surrounded by the worst of revolutionary excitements.

The villagers were led in triumphant procession through every quarter of the town. As they passed along the quay, scattered parties of the populace were shouting in joyous acclamations, as some boats, filled with people of both sexes, put off from the shore. Were these the enthusiastic adieus of affection, blended with the winds to waft its objects safely over the waves? No—a desperate enjoyment was mixed with the hoarse sounds, unlike the faint farewell of tenderness and friendship. What meant the answering shrieks sent forth from every boat—the fierce struggles of frantic women and despairing men, visible to the astonished eyes of the Vendéans? Could these be the expressions of departing love tearing itself from those

who had long filed the breasts of the unhappy crews? No, no; it is not thus that parting scenes are signalized; not thus that inevitable, or even sudden, separations affect the traveller, of whom hope anticipates the return. Alas! it was the *noyades*, whose frightful festival was now in celebration. Those bloodless butcheries, those quiet massacres, which first stole upon the victims in all the seduction of tranquility, but which, when betrayed by their discovery, came more shocking than the direst preparations for slaughter.

The day was closing in upon these horrid scenes, when the prisoners flung themselves upon their heaps of straw in the gloomy prison called *L'Entrepot*. Each hour which brought them nearer to their end showed them the terrible novelties of life. Dungeons and shackles, and blood and blasphemy, surrounded them. The night passed by in darkness; but the din of agonized despair—the clank of chains—the echoing of clenched fists against the half-distracted head—the laugh of maniac fear—the walking of the weak—the imprecations of the violent—the deep breath of the sleepers, for even *there* was sleep—the death rattle in the throats of those who thus cheated the monsters of the morrow,—these were the combinations that filled up the creeping hours.

The grated portal was thrown open with the dawn, and the anxious guards rushed in. Their first care was to remove the bodies of the happy few who had died during the night; and these were dragged forth with indignities, which fell on the sympathizing survivors, not on them! Next came the selection of the victims of the day. Many were hurried out as their names were successively called over. For the females of the lately arrived group, one chance of life remained. It was permitted to each republican soldier to choose from among the condemned, one woman to be acknowledged as his wife. The same privilege existed with regard to children; and, being exercised with unbounded humanity, many an adopted infant of Royalist-, and often of noble blood, has been ushered to the world; and numbers, no doubt, at this moment exist, as the reputed offspring of revolutionary parents.

Upon every new arrival in the prisons, the well-disposed of the soldiery came in to exercise this right, and a party now waited for admission.

When the previously allotted victims were drawn out for execution, this band of expectants was ushered in. They entered quickly on their scrutiny; but being actuated by humanity much more than passion, the selection was not a matter of difficulty or delay. All the women of the little group were instantly chosen forth but one. Need I name her? Who could have chosen Jeannette? It was impossible. She was looked at but to be turned from; and showing no sort of interest in her own fate, she excited the less regard from others. She finally remained behind with three or four men, for whom there was no hope. Of these, two saw their wives led forth in the possession of their respective claimants; and, dead to every feeling of their own fate, they now called for death with an eager alacrity—throwing themselves at the feet of the soldiers, embracing their knees, and calling

down blessings on the preservers of those for whom alone they ever thought of life.

One by one the prisoners appeared, either to be sacrificed or saved. Jeannette, who lay extended in a remote and darkened corner of the room, insensible to what was passing, at length raised her head, and looking round the chamber, found that she was alone. Horrible as was her solitude, it gave her some relief. She felt free to give vent to the accumulated anguish of so many days, and she, not unwillingly, discovered that her cheeks were flooded with tears. She gave herself up to the full abandonment of her sorrow, and sobbed and sighed aloud. The sentinel who paced outside the grating heard the unexpected sounds, for he thought the chamber totally untenanted. He entered, and saw the miserable figure of our heroine reclined upon her straw. Astonished at the oversight which had left her behind, he approached and gently raised her up. He asked, in soothing terms, for his heart was touched, "Why had she not been brought out with the other prisoners?" She knew not why. "Had she no friend in Nantes?" She had no friend any where. "Did she know any republican, civil or military?" She never knew but one, and he was now dead. "What was his name?" "Ja Coste." "Where did he die?" "He was killed in La Vendee." "Had she any memorial of his which might be recognised by his friends?" "Yes, a black silk handkerchief"—taking it from her head, and handing it to the soldier. "Only *this*? nothing more?" "Oh! yes, some of his handwriting"—producing the scrap of scribbled paper. The soldier rejecting the first rather questionable token of identity, took the latter; uncreased, refolded, smoothed, and looked at it attentively, in hopes of its affording some clue by which to discover who was the writer. While he was thus occupied, Jeannette felt as if her existence was renewed; as if another spring had burst out in the desert of her bosom; and being instinctively impressed with the belief that she now might learn the sentiments of him whom she had so tenderly loved, she entreated the soldier to read the manuscript aloud. But while the sentinel prepared to read, the clattering of footsteps broke in upon her reverie, and the jailor, with some soldiers of the guard, quickly entered the room. With violent execrations they accused the sentinel of having purposely concealed Jeannette, while he on his part retorted his reproach upon the jailor. The security of the victim was, however, the surest means of reconciliation. The dispute was soon arranged, and our heroine handed over to the accompanying guard, with directions to hurry her to the quay, where her companions waited only her arrival to proceed to *embarkation*! They seized her, and hastened her onwards, her face besmeared with a concrete of dust and tears; her clothes torn and disordered; her hair dishevelled and loose upon her shoulders, for the handkerchief which had bound it was left behind in the prison. All these concurrent disfigurements heightened her natural defects, and in this state she reached the boat. Several of the old and condemned of both sexes were already embarked, but not one female, with the least pretensions to youth, was there. She was pushed over the side by the guards, and received on board by the ready executioners, with a shout of mockery. The preparations

being all completed, the boatmen were in the very act of pushing from the shore, when a young soldier, flushed and panting, forced his way through the crowd; plunged into the water, seized the prow of the boat, and cried out loudly, "Hold! I am not too late. I choose that girl for my wife." The object of his choice shrieked on seeing him, and as he held forth his arms to receive her, she sunk fainting on the floor. The guards, the prisoners, the lookers on, were all for a moment mute. The scene was so quick, and the choice so inexplicable, that no time was given for comment, conjecture, or opposition. A moment more and the boat pushed off—but lightened of its wretched freight, for the insensible Jeannette was born triumpantly to land, in the nervous arms of the grateful and generous La Coste.

I must not now linger on my narrative, the interest of which I know to be nearly over. Little remains to be told, and that little shall be shortly despatched. La Coste hastened to explain to his astonished Jeannette, who soon recovered her senses, on his bosom, that on the morning after their parting, he had succeeded in safely making his way to the outposts of the republican army, where he arrived just as the battle began; that he had escaped unhurt during the whole of that dreadful day; that at the close of the fight, when victory was no longer doubtful, the division to which his regiment belonged was ordered off to Nantes by a route different from the village; and that in the moment of his departure, finding the impossibility of making his way to the cottage, whose half consumed ruins he saw smoking from the heights, he had intrusted to a chosen comrade the task of seeking it, of relating his safety to Jeannette, if she still lived, and of delivering her the purse which might have been so useful.

I must not attempt to describe the sensations of our heroine on hearing this wondrous recital; nor the grief of La Coste on learning the fate of his friend. He went on, however, to state that, arrived at Nantes, he had been too particularly occupied to know of the approach of the poor remnant of the villagers, whom report had stated to have every soul perish in the sack and conflagration of their homes, but that he had heard, within a few minutes of her adventure, and ascertained her identity, in a chance conversation with the sentry of the prison, a man wholly unknown to him, who was relating the circumstances to a group of his fellow soldiers. He said that he had but one line of action to pursue. He promptly followed it—and she was now his nominal wife.

He kept the girl with him under this title for three months, but no ceremony had made them one. He treated her, however, with a tenderness and respect more than is to be found in many a legitimate union; but Jeannette clearly perceived that gratitude was the only spring which actuated his bosom with regard to her. She had never hoped for more, nor reckoned on so much; yet satisfied and even happy, she had some moments of alarm when she reflected that stronger feelings might sometime or other break the ties which thus bound them together. Her apprehensions, and the strength of his attachment, were soon put to the test, for invasion just then advanced on every side; and his regiment, among others, was ordered to the

frontiers at a notice of one day. Jeannette, feeling that she had no further claim upon him; that he had overpaid the service she had rendered him; and that such a wife as she was could be but an encumbrance to such a man as he;—told him frankly, that miserable as it would make her, she wished him to consider himself perfectly free; and that being now able to work her own way in the world, she hoped that no delicacy to her, would make him risk the ruin of his own prospects of life. La Coste *was* delicately and difficultly placed. I have said that he was handsome and pleasing. His figure and his manners, were, in those days of equality, a certain passport to the best—that was the richest—society in Nantes. He was very generally admired, and had been particularly distinguished by the daughter of a wealthy and violent republican. She was beautiful and accomplished. She had solicited his attentions, and he had even a regard for her person. Had he married her, he was certain of both rank and riches;—but if he did so, what was to become of Jeannette? He summed up, in one of those mental moments, which can grasp at a glance such multitudes of calculations, the manifold advantages of such a match. He then turned towards Jeannette, and though I cannot say that looking on her face made him “forget them all,” I may safely assert, that picturing to himself her forlorn and desolate perspective, he felt some spell strong enough to make him renounce the mighty temptations to abandon her. The struggle was short, for he married her on the moment, and the next morning they marched off together for the seat of war. How many ready mouths will exclaim, “He only did his duty!” Would that such duties were more commonly performed!

For twenty-one years La Coste served as a private soldier. He was brave and well conducted, but he had not the good fortune of promotion. For this entire period Jeannette was his faithful and affectionate wife. She earned, by her industry, sufficient to add some scanty comforts to his barrack-room or his tent. Through Germany, Italy, and Spain, she attended him in many a bloody campaign, and stood unflinching by his side in many an hour of peril and distress; and at length, after all, watched by his death-bed in his native town, when peace gave him time to die. They had one daughter, beautiful and good. She, too, married a soldier, who was discharged when war became out of fashion; and following his trade of gardening, he now supports with comfort his wife and five children, and gives refuge to his mother-in-law, whose declining years do not prevent her from usefully exerting her talents as a washerwoman.

I have seen the whole group in a cottage, which I thought happier than some homes of prouder dimensions; or sporting in their garden, which is fragrant and flourishing as others surrounding less enviable, though more refined, societies. Jeannette, or, if the reader should prefer the title, Madame La Coste, has not lost her appellation of *La vilaine tête*, and, perhaps, her claim to it is somewhat strengthened by the ravages and wrinkles of increasing age, and the deep bronzing of the southern sun. This tale was given from her own recital, and most likely the reader requires not to be told that my old washerwoman of the village of Medoc, was herself the identical heroine. If I have

sometimes enlarged on the details, or substituted my own language for that of the narrator, I have probably done mischief, when I thought I was embellishing. The effect produced on me was, perhaps, overrated in my estimate of its power on others—while sitting before me in my inn bed-room, my old and ugly washerwoman broke suddenly off from counting my linen to the subject of her own eventful story; and carelessly lolling on her chair, commenced, with the naivete of a peasant, and in the untranslatable idiom of La Vendee, to tell her simple tale; interrupted often by sighs for her husband, her grandmother, and her native village, whose name now hardly exists but in her memory.

NOTE.

Having, in the introduction to this Tale, truly assured the reader that it is a true story, and made an admission that it has been somewhat "worked up," to use a technical phrase, I have little to add respecting it; for I will not attempt the creation of a forced interest in favor of any portion of these volumes. But a few observations strike me as not altogether out of place, in recurring to the events of La Vendee during the first revolution as compared to what took place there a few years back. For this contrast gives strength to my opinions of the character of the inhabitants and their conduct at the former fearful epoch.

During the insurrection of La Vendee in 1832—33, under the influence of the Duchess of Berri, it was evident that the public mind was not in the cause, and that only because the domestic sentiments of the people were not affected. The mere watchword of "the throne and the altar," was not enough to rouse the peasantry as of old; it fell an empty sound, and died away unheeded in the recesses of the beccage. The cause for which they fought forty years before existed no longer. It was not enough that a Bourbon and a La Roche-Jacquelin were in the field—that *Pro aris et focis* was inscribed on their banners, or that those banners were white. The color and the rallying cry were the same as before—but the sentiment they embodied was buried in the graves of the last century.

Yet instances of valour, devotion and true gallantry, were exhibited in this late short struggle of perhaps even greater merit than those which these pages have faintly recorded. The men who perished at the call of the Duchess de Berri and for the name of the youth who bears the *sobriquet* of Henri V. fell in a *hopeless* cause. They never for one day had the faintest chance of success. They knew it well; yet they dropped obscurely into the bloody graves which their heroism at least preserves from the reproach of being inglorious.

And so has it been in a thousand cases of late, with Frenchmen of all opinions. Whether as Republicans in the streets of Paris or Lyons, or as Royalists in the fields of Brittany, the same noble principle of sincerity has been displayed. Politics with Frenchmen are a sentiment, not a science. They die for the sake of their cause, rather than live for their own. Success, fortune, existence, are as nothing, if the objects they uphold are to be forwarded by the sacrifice. Whether this is the better or the worse for their country, I do not mean to discuss at the fag end of a Roadside story. But that it is the true, the chief, and the ennobling characteristic of the Frenchman, events have proved indelibly.

THE
BIRTH OF HENRY IV.

"L'Enfant vint au monde, sans crier ni pleurer."
DE PEREFIXE.

VOL. I.

10



THE BIRTH OF HENRY IV.

There is not in nature a finer spectacle than a distant chain of mountains covered with snow, and glistening in the sun. It is impossible to describe this appearance, nor is it easy to define the sensations it produces in the mind. The object has in it something loftier than beauty, and possesses a softened sublimity totally unassociated with fear. Unlike other vast works of nature, it does not excite awe; nor does it, like those of art, bring humiliating notions of imperfection and decay: but stretching far away along the horizon, in celestial splendor of coloring, it looks like the boundary of the world, and might be believed a fitting resting-place between earth and heaven.

Such were my reflections when I first discovered the Pyrenees, at about thirty leagues distance, from the rising grounds near the town of Villeneuve de Marsan. I shall never forget that moment. My delight was of a kind to be felt but once in life, but which stamped an impression, vivid in proportion to its suddenness, and more lasting than that produced by years of calm and regulated enjoyment. In gazing on the golden transparency which the mountains seemed to present, I fancied myself transported to some scene of fairy-land, and doubted for a while their existence. They looked more like the cloud-formed imagery of the skies, and I many a time regretted, as I approached them, the illusion which their solid reality put to flight.

Every league which brought me nearer lessened the enchantment, but added to the romance of the scene. The visionary and fairy-like aspect gradually dissolved, as the charms of nature were growing into life, and as the actual beauties of existence appeared to force their way through the veil of radiance by which they had been covered. Step by step, the mountains rose into height and majesty. Dark green masses became evident, instead of the glittering heaps of snow which I had seen at first. Woods, rocks, and streams, made themselves next distinguished, in all their variety of shade and form; and in three days from that on which these magnificent hills were first visible to me, I reposed at their base, impressed with the fullest sense of their mightiness and my own insignificance.

It is not for me to describe the beauties of these mountains. Volumes have been poured forth on the subject, and will be succeeded by volumes, as long as the noblest scenes of nature can excite admiration, or until some miracle robs men of their desire to tell what they have seen, and express what they feel. Those scenes are certainly the region for composition. Wandering in their wild and exquisite paths, carried beyond the world's realities, absorbed in contemplation, and given up to the abandonment of fancy, the mind willingly indulges its overflowings, and cares not whether they take the form of poetry or prose. Indeed the productions of such moments must partake of the nature of both; and it was in one of those silent, sequestered, castle-building moods, that the following lines forced themselves into uncalled-for utterance:

These are the scenes where nature strews
Our way with wonders;—where we lose
Thought's measured march for countless hours;
When stretch'd beneath embracing bowers,
Deep in the lap of some soft vale,
Our languid minds its sweets inhale;
Or wandering on some streamlet's brink,
We love to step—to gaze—to think!
Then Fancy peoples the broad glades
With groups of early friendship's shades—
Changes the greenwood's sloping dell
To life's young play scenes loved so well—
Hears in the far sequester'd spot
Sounds hush'd, but ne'er to be forgot—
Clothes nature in a robe more bright—
Fills heaven with youth's empurpled light—
Cast o'er the coarse weeds' drooping fringe
A shapelier grace, and lovelier tinge—
While memory bends, as prone to lave
Its feverish flushings in the wave.

But the quick mind, with forward rush,
Bold as the mountain torrent's gush,
Springs from the thoughts of former years,
From faded hopes, from fruitless tears,
And bounding onwards, far and free,
Deserts dull fact for joys to be.
Then leap to life, in fairy train,
Those fond illusions of the brain;
Those shadowy structures that we raise
To hoard the bliss of unborn days!
Those lights from hopes ethereal beam,
Which sparkling through each treacherous dream,
Seem the false fabrics to unfold,
Like clouds by sunbeams bathed in gold.
Lightly the floating fictions rise,
As desert cheateries on the skies,
Till shatter'd by some thought of care,
The loosen'd fragments melt in air:
And worldly waters back reflect
The visionary architect!

And there are heaven-revealing times
 Which reason's radiant flame sublines ;
 When nobler views the heart inspire,
 And faith lights high her beacon fire,
 The clay-clogg'd powers of thought to guide
 Across the waves of passionate tide.
 Moments when earth's rude hum is still,
 And higher raptures lead the will ;
 When on the topmost mountain's breast
 We lay our length, and all is rest :
 Deep, deep beneath the plains are spread—
 But motion slumbering scenes, or dead.
 To our far gaze the world below
 Stands fix'd and silent : even the flow
 Of the live rivers seems to cease,
 And the eye marks their winding trace
 But as a line of liquid light,
 Noiseless, motionless, and bright.
 A soothing softness gathers round :
 The wind sleeps stilly on its couch
 Of fragrant wild-flowers ; while no sound
 The drowsy senses comes to touch,
 Nor wakes the seraph calm that steals
 Across the soul, whose trance reveals
 Scenes of high heaven, no longer hid
 From the full eye—each half-closed lid
 Shuts out all earth ; and only sees
 On the broad ocean of the air,
 Slow sailing onwards, though no breeze
 Is felt which could have borne them there,
 A tide of white, self-wat'ed clouds
 Come rolling on like snow-wreathed floods,
 And round the summit of the peak
 In shatter'd splendour softly break.
 But soon the fleecy fragments join'd,
 Float on their course, yet leave behind
 One lovely, vapory shade, that seems
 To hover lingering slowly nigh,
 As if upheld by these bright beams,
 Whose radiance lights it through the sky ;
 And o'er its breast such coloring flings
 As fancy gives to angels' wings.
 Oh ! who such shadowy couch could mark,
 Nor wish, nor hope life's deathless spark
 In disembodied splendours spread,
 Like light on this arial bed ;
 And borne, beyond the beams of day,
 On ray form'd pinions far away
 To the pure realms for which we sigh
 In pride of immortality !

But in all the varieties of the Pyrenees, their pics, valleys, rivers,
 and grottes, there is no part which conveys such a combination of
 rational delights as the ancient province of Bearn, the country of
 Henry IV. Natural beauties are every where scattered with a hand
 at once so liberal and just, that it is hard to particularize the parts

most deserving of notice. Bearn has its ample share of loveliness and grandeur; but in point of moral charms, none of the others can bear comparison with it.

The inhabitants of this district, viewed in whatever point we will, are one of the finest and most interesting people of the earth. Whether looked at in their physical aspect, as the best formed, the handsomest, and most active race existing; or in their national character, as uniting nobility of feeling with true politeness, hospitality with temperance, and courage with humanity, they command our admiration and regard. Considered with respect to their history, they merit a deeper attention, for they are perhaps the people who present the most perfect example of an indigenous and uncorrupted race, preserving its language, its customs, and its character, as they existed in the most remote antiquity.

From the period of the decline of the Roman empire, the confusion of races among the inhabitants of the Pyrenees was extreme. Mixed already with the Romans, they were so afterwards with the Alani, Suevi, Goths, and Franks; and, in some degree, with the Saracens during their excursions into France. In fact, but this one portion of the people preserved themselves pure in the midst of confusion, ravage, and defeat. This people, called by Roman writers *Vaccees* and *Vascons*, appear to have belonged to the country between the Pyrenees and the sources of the Ebro. Unknown to the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, who never crossed this river, and avoiding Roman subjugation in the refuge afforded them by their mountain fastnesses, they were able to resist successively the Visigoths and Moors. Finally possessing themselves of the country of the two Navarres, they penetrated early into Bearn; subjected for a while a part of the people of Aquitaine (who took from them the name of Gascons,) and their posterity exist this day in the persons of the Basques, and perhaps of the Biscayans, who claim a like origin.

While this extraordinary and ancient people remained thus unaltered, all around them was changed. The vivacity of the Gaul and the Iberian was modified more or less by Roman gravity and barbarian grossness. The inhabitants of Upper Aragon, Catalonia, and Bigorre, all, indeed, from the centre of the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean, showed no longer their primitive characters, a distinction destined for the people alone of whom I am now treating.*

Such was the race of whom Henry IV. was one; among whom he was born and brought up; and of whom his person and his character formed a distinguished and striking illustration. To such an origin and such a training he owed those fine qualities, inherited from his ancestors, and fostered by his people; and their obligations were reciprocal,—for to him alone are they indebted for their chief celebrity in modern times. The days being long since gone by when, ruled by their independent sovereigns, they made themselves remarkable either by their manner of choosing a king,† or by their conduct under

* On this subject see Ramond's *Observations sur les Pyrenees*.

† In 1173, wishing a master of the blood of their last sovereign, they sent a deputation to his sister to ask for one of her twin children. The request

his sway, the people of Bearn would have shared the common lot of other nations amalgamated and confused with their conquerors, had not the brilliant qualities of Henry stamped them with a proud distinction. As it is, they stand out as it were before us in an attitude of commanding and irresistible interest, and every individual forms a fine epitome of the dignified simplicity of his nation.

My readers may imagine with what pleasure I ranged these mountains and valleys, peopled by such a race, and consecrated by such remembrances. Abandoning the beaten track of common-place intercourse, it was ever my habit to throw myself into the by-roads of the hills; where, shut up, and in part identified with this isolated region, I breathed the very spirit of the people, and of the feelings by which they were guided and governed. It was in these rambles that I acquired a thorough esteem for these hardy mountaineers, and an enthusiastic attachment to the scenes they inhabit. My affection for them and their country was considerably strengthened from that sympathy excited throughout by the memory of the hero so worthy of his country and his people; whose reign was the real epoch of French glory, and whose name is a rallying word for every thought ennobling to humanity. But it was in an aspect less exalted, but full as remarkable, that he was now before me. As I wound through the passes of the hills, tracked the winding rivulets, or climbed the rugged rocks, Henry seemed always present to my view, as in his boyhood he scrambled over these mountain scenes, dressed like the peasant children, his feet unshod, and his head exposed to the sun and the wind.†

The Bidisosa was in my rear, Spain in my recollection, and Bayonne in sight, when I turned from the high route between that town and Pau, and struck into one of the gorges leading to the depths of these mountain solitudes. Nature was fresh and fragrant. The sun was bright. The branches of the young pines, and the mountain ash, moved gaily in the breeze, and the rivulets, gushing from the hills, danced down their sides, over beds of verdure which burst out in a profusion of richest vegetation.

I was so exhilarated and buoyant that, contrary to my usual wont, I walked remarkably fast, so much so as to keep Ranger at a regular dog trot. My thoughts were proportionately active, and ran on in that wild and curbless way, so frequently consequent on good health, good spirits, and mountain air. "Come on, Ranger!" cried I, "never fear! our wanderings *must* have a term, and who knows how

being granted, they had their choice. The infants both slept at the moment. One had his hands closed, the other had his open. The deputies saw in the latter attitude the sign of a noble and generous character. They chose him, and this monarch in his after-age acquired the title of Gaston *The Good*.

† Le grand-pere ne voulut pas qu'on le nourrist avec la delicatessen qu'on nourrait d'ordinaire les gens de cette qualite, mais il ordonna qu'en l'habillast et qu'on le nourrist comme les autres enfans du pais; et mesme qu'on l'accoustumast a courir et a monter sur les rochers. On dit que pour l'ordinaire on le nourrissoit de paic bis, de bœuf, de fromage, et d'aïl; et que bien souvent on le faisoit marcher nuds pieds et nue teste.—DE PEREFIXE *Histoire du Roy Henry le Grand*, Q. 1, p. 18, 19, 16mo, Elzevir, Ed. 1661.

soon? Yes, yes, there is something yet in the store for us. For me a snug cottage, a nice stock of books, good shooting, and a bottle of wine for a friend. For you, the chimney corner and a cushion.—Come along, Ranger; come along!"

A responsive wag of the tail acknowledged the cheering address; and a joyous roll on a tufted bed of wild thyme, followed by some indescribable capers and curvettings, announced his sympathy with my ambitious hopes.

I never could reckon leagues, nor remember time correctly; and on the morning I now describe was less than ever adapted to aught mathematical. I was in that mood of utter abandonment, and loss of self, which was never new to poets since Horace, nor before him;—when we "think down hours to moments," and slide over space unheeding of its measurement. I am thus unable to say how far or how long I had journeyed, when descending rapidly the mountain path, which was skirted with flowers, and fringed by two little streamlets running down the precipitous banks, I was stopped suddenly by a peal of laughter of enjoyment's finest and clearest tone. I was in tune for this cheerful note, and paused for its repetition. It came on my ear again and again—manly, honest, hearty, and at length died away in jovial echoings till nothing was heard but the chuckle of some staunch votary of fun, who never got farther, most certainly, than the mouth of Trophonius's cave.

The sounds were close to me, yet I saw no one; and I thought of the stories of Brownies, Kelpies, and other supernatural beings of whose joyous revels I had many times heard from the peasants of the Scotch highlands. I moved onwards, however, concluding that a harmless and cheerful traveller had nothing to fear from mortal or other company, with whom he was so much in unison.

As I trudged along, I heard an occasional voice which always seemed to utter a shout of gladness and triumph. This was accompanied by sounds, at irregular intervals, as if some hard substance was struck by another, for they rung echoing through the valley below me to the left.

The sounds became suddenly fainter as I got into a hollow part in the road; and I had almost lost them totally, when a quick turning in the path brought me round a projecting rock, and displayed to me, on the acclivity of the opposite side of a beautiful glen the secret of these mountain mysteries.

Hanging on the slope of the hill was a village of most romantic appearance. The ten or a dozen neat cottages which composed it were built, with little space between each, in the form of a semi-circle; by this means affording to all the inhabitants an ample view of that noble and manly game, which forms the pride and pastime of the Basques. A group of the village youths was placed on the green in the full exercise of their sport. They were eight in number, fine, athletic, handsome fellows, from fifteen years old to twenty-five perhaps, dressed in the smart costume of the country. One or two wore light cotton jackets, the rest were in their shirts; some were bare-headed, others with round flat caps, having a tassel of red worsted at the top, and all with short breeches, tied at the knees with red or

blue knots, blue stockings, sandals laced to the ankle and a scarf of scarlet cotton, tied sashways tightly round the waist. On each right hand was a glove of thick leather, which struck with incredible force and velocity the hard ball, that seemed to carry death in its whizzing course. Not being initiated in the game, I leave its various details to the imagination of my readers, but I may safely say, that in no match of English cricket, Scotch golf, or Irish hurling (and many a one of each have I seen and joined in,) did I ever witness such agility, skill, and elegance of attitude, as in this party of *jeu de paume*.

On the benches were four or five old men, with about as many women, delighted spectators of the scene and glad echoes of the bursts of joy which followed each superiorly successful effort. Some younger females were occupied in various ways about the houses, while two or three were washing at the rivulets below. One stepped upwards towards home, with a pitcher on her head, a white scarf thrown fancifully over her neck, and tied with a bunch of blue ribbons, and her petticoats sufficiently short to show a pair of exquisite legs, to which every part of her form was suitable. The loveliest nymph of Greece, or even those goddesses whose imagined symmetry might have dipped the pencil of Apelles in his brightest tints, or shaped and polished the marble of Praxitiles, would not, I am convinced, have borne away the palm in a competition of grace and beauty with this rustic maid.

While my attention was taken from the sport of the young men, and fixed upon this still more attractive object, *her* eye seemed riveted on the group, or some one member of it, which mine had rejected; and so intently did she gaze on the progress of the game, that she forgot her own, and her foot catching in a bramble, she tumbled and fell. A light scream broke from her companions at the river, who saw the accident. An old couple, who had watched her with affectionate looks as she came up, hobbled towards her. The game was in an instant abandoned. The players ran to the spot; I remarked that one of them, whose station had been at the other extremity of the ground, overtook the whole party before they reached the prostrate beauty. It was the affair altogether of a couple of minutes.—She was unable to rise higher than her knees; not that she was in the least hurt, but her scarf had got most awkwardly entangled in the briers which had tripped her foot, and during her endeavors to extricate herself, the whole population of the village had thronged round her. Every one offered assistance; but I observed that she repulsed all hands stretched out to relieve her with a sort of blushing and bashful peevishness at her situation, until she discovered the identical youth who had outstripped his companions, but was now confounded with them. She gave him a smile peculiarly gracious; and he had the honor of helping her on her feet, and replacing her pitcher which lost its contents, but was not even cracked in the fall.

The scene ended gaily and good humoredly. Many a joke, was, no doubt, bandied at the expense of the maiden, who darted once more down the winding path to refill the vessel; while her young squire sprang after her, probably to keep her eyes steady when she next ascended. The old couple returned to their seat, their coun-

tenances showing that little agitation which *grandfatherly* and *grandmotherly* faces generally display on such harmless accidents.

The whole party were resuming their places, when I caught the general attention, in the advanced position to which I had involuntarily sprung, and where I now stood, my feet crossed, and my hands supported by the muzzle of my gun. When I saw that I was observed, I took off my hat and made a low obeisance. It was unanimously returned; and on my showing an inclination to descend to the stream, in a direct line from the place where I stood, several hands were waved, and three or four voices addressed me together. I did not understand a word that was spoken, but the purport was evident; for the stream was broadest in that particular spot, and a little plank was thrown across it, about fifty yards higher up, and to which the villagers pointed. But it was one of my moments of weakness and vanity; and, wishing to give a proof of my activity to these muscular and agile peasants, I ran down the slope, my gun in my hand, determined to leap the stream. It was tolerably wide, but not within a third of the breadth which I was confident in my ability to cross at a running jump; but, as if to punish my vain-gloriousness, my foot slipped as I made the bound, and I came with my breast against the opposite bank, and up to my knees in water. It was vexatious as well as laughable, and I suppose there was a frown mixed with the smile which I could not repress as I scrambled up the side. All the young men ran to my assistance; the old people rose from their seats; the girls ceased their washing; but I did not see my smile reflected on a single face. One of the girls, indeed, who had laughed the heartiest at the fall of her young companion a few minutes before, turned her back towards me. I fancy she was forced to give way to her merry feelings at my ludicrous mishap, but she had the true-born politeness to keep their expression from my view.

I was soon on my legs, and was hurried to the nearest cottage, where a chair was placed for me before the kitchen fire. I here formed a centre of attraction (if not of gravity) for the inhabitants of the village, who came, of all ages, to gratify their curiosity at the novel sight of a stranger. It was well for me that I had few personal secrets to conceal from these good people, for I became an object of the most minute and indefatigable scrutiny. A custom-house officer, a fox-hound in cover, or a ferret in a rabbit warren, could not have made a keener search in their respective pursuits than did the little black-haired urchins, from eight years downwards, in my knapsack, my game-bag, and my pockets. I know not what they looked for, if not the mere gratification of curiosity, for they certainly took nothing. The young men examined my gun, shot-pouch, and powder-horn, with critical attention; and the old fathers of the hamlet eyed me with a gaze worthy of craniological acumen and observation.

Fortunately for me, two or three of the party understood and spoke French. Among them was a young fellow, who, in resuming the costume of his native district, had not entirely thrown aside some of the distinguishing marks of military service. He wore mustachios,

and a black stock, and looked stiff-necked and formal in comparison with his elastic and loose-limbed companions. His manners, too, had something of ostentation and parade, and he seemed inclined to lord it over the others. He pushed himself forward in his civilities, and would have drilled his comrades into a more distant demeanor than was natural to them, or pleasing to me. He had not, however, any thing actually disagreeable in him; and had I met him in any other circle than among the children of nature, of whom he once was one, I should have probably singled him out as a soldier, but a little spoiled by the foppery and pomp of his profession.

Among the objects of wonder discovered in my knapsack (when, searching for a pair of stockings, I first opened it to the admiring gaze of the observers,) two seemed to attract particular regard, viz. a pocket map of France, and an eleven-keyed flute. The first was greedily gazed on by an old man, whose keen quick eye seemed meant by nature for the study of the rule and square; and had I but the requisite knowledge of the science of sciences, I think I should have found the algebraical bump particularly prominent on, what appeared to me, his smooth round pate. He was evidently much pleased, and not a little puzzled, by the mathematical mysteries displayed before him: His eye asked for information, but he could not make himself understood. He was forced to apply to the young soldier, who acted as interpreter, and by this medium I explained the purposes of those mystic lines, over which the old peasant had been pondering.

He was delighted when I pointed out Pau, and the windings of the Gave, and the banks of one whose tributary streamlets we were then making our harmless partition of district and provinces. But the parallels of latitude were quite beyond his powers; and I was not a little amused at the air of importance and learned research with which he announced his conjecture, that they were meant to designate the course of rivers; heedless, like many a profound theorist, whether they flowed up or down hill—over or under mountains—or had their sources in the sea, or out of it.

As for the flute, it excited an admiration as boundless as it was general. Nothing like it had ever found its way into these remote parts. The slender reed of the mountain-shepherd, or the simple reed of the village musician, had no claims to those gorgeous and embarrassing distinctions which rifle the pockets of fools, puzzle their fingers, and falsify their instrument. In short, the monstrous improvements of a late immortal projector had probably never penetrated to the vale of Oléron, had not my knapsack been furnished identically as it was. I was determined, however, to make the best of a bad bargain; and when, yielding to the solicitations of the lads, and the wistful looks of the lasses around me, I took up the flute to prove the possibility of using it, I made a clatter among the keys (clumsily enough had I chosen to confess it,) which fixed my reputation as firmly as the principles of the music I so marred. I received in acknowledgment an ample dose of that silent applause so palatable and easy of digestion; and luckily for me, there was no Flute of the party, to ask what I meant by the noise made.

All this while the good woman to whom the cottage belonged was preparing for me a truly pastoral meal. Eggs, milk, honey, butter, and bread were placed before me, all perfectly delicious in quality, and in such proportions, as are fitting for mountain appetites.

As the table filled, the room emptied; and the delicacy of my rustic circle in thus retiring, caused me full as much pleasure, I warrant it, as they had experienced from the most extravagant exhibition of my musical skill. My kind entertainer appeared to enjoy high respect among the villagers. She spoke French well, and had a smattering of Spanish. I had no time to inquire particulars of a history which, from her erudition, intelligence, and good manners, promised something above her station. I only learned that, in her youth, she had lived at Bayonne, where her father had been employed in the customs, and where she acquired her knowledge; and that on his losing his situation and his head, during the troubles of the Revolution, she had retired to the protection afforded by the honest Basques, and the obscure village.

Having told me so much, she left me to the discussion of my exquisite repast. While I ate and cogitated, I heard a confused murmur, like the humming of a mighty swarm of bees; and in that kind of restless curiosity which often breaks in on our most important moments, I looked out of the window into the little garden, and on the lawn, to discover whence the sound proceeded. But it became fainter as I approached the open air. I was fain to sit down again unsatisfied, but the buzz continued; and, determined to explore the whole apartment, I opened a couple of little closets, a clothes-press, and a salt-box, without any result but disappointment. I next groped round the walls, and one side of the room being formed by a wooden partition papered over, I clapped my ear close to it, and found myself on the high road to information. The sounds were louder and more distinct; so feeling for a chink between the planks of the partition, I pierced a little hole through the paper with the screw attached to my pocket knife, and applying my eye to it, I perceived about a dozen of the peasant children seated on a form, and conning over their lessons; while placed before a little rickety desk, in an old oak arm-chair, was my hostess, in all the tempered majesty of a village school-mistress.

The temple was homely, the priestess plain, and the votaries of little worth; but knowledge was the goddess they invoked! That was sufficient for me; and I protest, that the most dazzling display of academical pomp never inspired me with deeper devotion for learning than I was filled with on beholding this humble tribute to its value.

Being refreshed and satisfied, I prepared to set out; but my proceedings being carefully observed by the young people on the green, they no sooner saw that I had finished my meal, than they advanced towards me in a body. While I had been eating, they had all prepared themselves for dancing, and they now came gaily forwards, to request my performance on the flute. That being easily accorded I took my station in front of the house, on a bench overhung by vines and honeysuckles. The dancers were soon in their places, and the opera never showed a display of more natural agility and taste.

Flowers and ribbons had been hastily twined in the hair of the females. They all, to use an Irish phrase, "handled their feet" with uncommon grace, and the whole group was a fine specimen of the living picturesque. Two of the girls had castanets, the use of which they had learned from some straggling Spaniards who had tarried awhile in the villa. e. Two of the young men carried those little tambourins which formed a constant accompaniment to the dances of the Basques; and I, discarding the use of a good two-thirds of my eleven keys, contrived to play, in tolerable time and tune, some of those sweet country dances in which the French do positively excel all nations.

The dance being ended, I fairly began to take leave. I shook hands with every one around me; and the reader may believe me, that when I relinquished the grasp of my erudite hostess, she blushed a deep blush of offended pride on finding a piece of money in her palm. She did not speak a word, but stepping briskly up to me as I turned round, she replaced it in my hand, and there was in her manner a modest determination which utterly forbid a renewal of the affront.

My old mathematician was sitting under a lime-tree musing on the map. He stood up, and offered it to me with a look as if he had been parting from a dear friend. I put it between his hands as I cordially shook them, and in a way to mark that such was its final destination. He looked quite surprised and happy; placed one hand on his heart, and with the other took off his cap, and swept it down to the grass. I wished to say "good bye" to the soldier, but I saw that he skulked round a clump of acacias, and evidently avoided me.

I asked the school-mistress if she knew the cause of this caprice. "Alas! my dear sir," said she, you know not the wound you have unconsciously given to the vanity of the poor fellow. He is the musician, *par excellence*, of the whole village; but the shrill tones of his fife are, I fear, forever hushed. Nothing, I think, could console him for this day's disgrace."

No, no, said I to myself, after a moment's pause, it is impossible. By Jove, I cannot, will not be always a fool! To buy it was bad enough; but to give it away in this manner would be worse. "My good hostess, I am indeed sorry that my gaudy instrument should have put the poor lad out of conceit with his more simple, but, no doubt, sweeter one. Tell him so for me, and that I hope he will soon change his key, and discard all discord from his feelings. To you I should be glad to give some little proof of my esteem. Do take this little edition of La Fontaine's Fables. I have carried it in my pocket for some leagues, and it has helped me to shorten many of them. It is not of value enough to be refused, and only worth acceptance for the excellence of the matter, and the good will of the donor."

"I take it with pleasure, and thankfully," replied she; "and the only thing I can offer you in return is this scrap of a pamphlet, which as relating to our country, may interest you for half an hour."

I took her present, and glancing my eye on the title, found it to be in French, "The Birth of Henry IV." I rolled it up and put it carefully in my pocket to be read at my leisure.

Several handkerchiefs and *berrets* were waved after me as I

wound down the hill, followed by Ranger, whose round paunch and sober pace did honor to the hospitality of the village. The last thing I saw of these unsophisticated people was the lovely girl, whose fall I have recounted, walking slowly in a shady path with her lover—for I would lay a good round wager that he was her lover, ay, and her favored lover too.

As I passed them, they both, by signs and looks, wished me a pleasant walk—a compliment which I thought it quite unnecessary to return. My eyes said something to them in reply, however, which was answered on the part of the nymph

With a smile that glow'd
Celestial rosy-red, love's proper hue :

and by the lover with a look of self-content, which seemed to say that he agreed with me perfectly.

The echoing sounds of the ball, which once more came upon my ear, told me that the much loved game was in full play. I believe I had one passing thought of something like chagrin, to think that my departure had left so slight an impression on the villagers. But this was quickly replaced by the consoling fancy that they had recourse to their sports to banish their regrets: and one self-sufficient notion followed another, as fast as vanity could string them together, or folly give them utterance. It is, however, certain that I hurried my pace at a marvellous rate, to the great discomfiture of Ranger's digestion; and any ill-natured reader may account for my speed, by supposing that I feared to encounter a new burst of jollity, which might have thrown me back into the sad belief that I was no longer thought of.

I walked in a beautiful valley. A clear stream, as is usual in these mountain hollows, ran in the middle, and the hilly banks were covered with woods. A few straggling cottages, like outliers from the village herd, were perched in little nooks upon the heights, and the dark green of the vegetable garden, attached to each, formed a rich contrast to the yellow corn-fields and bright meadows which surrounded them. The variety of position in these lofty regions makes a variety of climates within a small compass. In some of the exposed and open places the harvest was far advanced. In others more sheltered from the sun, it was just begun. The upland meadows were in some parts mowed: in others, the group of after-grass was springing, under the influence of continual irrigation from a dozen ever-flowing streams. The low grounds near the rivulet, were now yielding their treasures to the labor of the mower, and in one spot, where I stopped to gaze on the lovely scenery, I heard the flail, the sythe, and the sickle joined in a harmony of rural sounds.

Just there the confluence of several streamlets from the hills had formed a basin of water, which worked out a considerable excavation in the banks. The earth was quite washed away from the base of a large rock at the side where I walked, and my path was abruptly terminated on the pebbly edge of the little lake. To have climbed the rock, by means of the creeping shrubs which covered it, would have

been very difficult if not dangerous, and no one being in sight to stimulate my love of fame, I did not attempt it. Besides, I considered that if I even got to the top, I might have to descend again in search of an outlet. Something told me, too, that I was not the first who had arrived at the termination of the little road; and I thought the chances were against its having been made for the mere purpose of leading people into a scrape. I therefore determined to call for help, hoping at least, that the genus of the stream would deign to come to my aid. I loudly hallooed "Boat! boat!" and my call was not long unnoticed. Close to where I stood, and almost touching the rock which projected over the water, a little pointed prow came suddenly towards me; and as the full length of the boat came in view, it swung up to the beach, by the management of a rope and pulley attached to the rock, but which escaped my previous observation. No living thing appeared, but I did not hesitate to accept the courteous but silent offer of a passage, and, stepping gallantly over the side, I put myself under the protection of all the nymphs and naiads that ever ruled or sported in these waters.

As soon as I was embarked, the little canoe swung round again, and was pulled by some invisible hand round the rock, to a romantic little cove about ten yards at the other side. Still there was no one to be seen. This looked certainly very much like enchantment—but it was no enchantment after all. For while I stood with one foot on the gunnel and another on shore, looking my inquiries from hill and dale, a hoarse gruff voice called out, "Here! this way!" I followed the direction of the ungracious tones; and, at half a dozen paces from me, observed a kind of grotto, or hut or hovel, which was a puzzling mixture of the architecture of beautiful nature and rude art. Wishing to describe it by an epithet clear and concise, I shall call it the rustic-composite; and I shall be happy to show any of my curious readers a copy from this model when ever it pleases the Fates to allow me to

Call one spot of all the world my own.

Peeping out from a little loop-hole in this resting-place was a rough-looking personage, of an aspect such as Sharon might have shown had he been a toll gatherer instead of a ferryman. Having no strongly developed taste for mechanics, I did not feel any desire to examine the contrivance by which he brought his boat to harbor and then sent her out again for a new freight; and not finding any thing inviting in his physiognomy or address, I paid him his *sous* and made my way up the the path which ascended a tolerably high hill. I meant to indulge myself, when I should reach the top, with a view of the country, and a perusal of the schoolmistress's phamplet; but a new rencontre retarded for a little the gratification of my curiosity, and the reader cannot grumble if he shares the same fate.

As I prepared to ascend, my eye was caught by a figure descending rapidly towards me. It was that of a man, tall, stout, and vigorous. A broad-leaved hat covered his head. He wore a blue tight cotton vest, small-clothes of the same, with large ties of red tape.

His legs were bare; and sandals of undressed cow-hide, the hair inward, were tied round his ankles with thongs of leather. In a broad belt buckled round his waist were attached a small hatchet, for clearing his passage through the glaciers, and a pair of iron-spiked shoes, without which it is impossible to traverse the snowy regions at the summit of the mountains. Across his shoulders was flung a short carbine, and in his hand he bore a staff spiked at one end, to aid his ascent in the passes of ice then glittering before us.

The moment he perceived me, he stopped short, sprung half behind a large stone; and in an instant his carbine was cocked, and his eye fixed fiercely on me. "Friend or foe?" asked he in Spanish, and in a tone which sounded like a positive declaration of war.

"I am a traveller," replied I, "and a foe to no honest man." He looked at me a moment sternly, but not so fiercely as at first; and seeing nothing hostile in my attitude or manner, he stepped towards me, his carbine in his hand, ready for action if required, and taking care to keep the advantage of the high ground. As he approached, I rested the but-end of my gun upon the ground, and waited his address. "If I am not mistaken, sir," said he in French, "you are not a Frenchman."

"You are right," replied I.

"English, by the Virgin!" exclaimed he, and springing forward, he stretched out his hand. Though not quite in unison with the impetuous warmth of his friendship, I gave him my hand, and received a squeeze that tingled through every nerve of my body. His eyes at the same time brightened; a flush of swarthy red showed itself on the dark brown of his cheek, and he smiled as if he was sincerely and heartily pleased.

Viewing him in this light, without a shade of the ferocity which first struck me, I thought him, and still think he was, the handsomest man I ever saw. His black hair curled down upon his shoulders. He did not wear mustachios, but his upper lip only was shaved, and his beard and whiskers were bushy and short, such as we give to a Roman hero of from thirty to forty years of age. His shirt was open at the neck, and exposed his breast covered with curly hair, and displaying a most imposing breadth and strength. "You are English," cried he, "I Spanish—are we not then friends?" He spoke in his own language. I replied in French, which was easier to me, that I hoped our nations were and would be always friends.

"I hope so too," cried he, "for many a day have I fought side by side with the noble English. From the Ebro to the Adour we marched step by step together; and the passes of these hills have many a time heard the echo of my carbine joined with that of Wellington's cannon."

"You are no longer a soldier?" asked I.

"No, I am now nothing more nor less than a smuggler. Ever since the affair of Orthes, there below us, where I got a French bullet through my body, I have trod the roads of these, my native mountains, making out life and cheating the king, just as well as I could. You see I tell you frankly what I am, lest you might take me for worse. A smuggler, mind you, not a robber. But, if you would know me better, ask Mina.—They say he is at Paris. Ask

him the character of Josef Ramirez, the Guerilla of Jaca! But time presses. I have a long road before me, and must not tarry. Go! he with you! Adieu!"

Repeating, with these words, the friendly and forcible squeeze of the hand, the smuggler parted from me, and was in a minute or two in deep conversation with the toll-taker at the rivulet side. The latter pointed to me, as if counselling caution; but the other, without looking at me, shook his head, and clapped his companion on the shoulder, as much as to say, "Fear nothing—he is English."

The short conference being ended, the smuggler stepped into the boat, without once turning his head to salute friends or look for foes. He wheeled round the cliff, and was in a moment lost to my sight, but not forever. In about an hour afterwards, as I gazed from the top of the hill, at whose foot we parted, at the splendid view, and thrilled with a delight ever new to me, at the near prospect of these stupendous mountains—I saw a dark cloud come sweeping down their side; and marching stoutly to meet it, the hardy figure of the smuggler caught my attention. He had made most rapid way; yet the various winding of the vales, and the lesser hills which he had crossed, kept him still sufficiently near to enable me to view him distinctly. Wishing to give him a signal of recollection and good will, I fired a shot, which reverberated in a hundred echoes round me, but he either did not hear the report, or scorned to pay attention to it.

I sat down at the moment on a smooth spot; and on one of the fragments of rock which were scattered round me, I sketched the following lines: It was not the fault of either the subject or the scene that they were not better.

THE MOUNTAINEER.

Brave, enterprising, firm, and proud,
He boldly steps the dangerous path,
Faces the gathering thunder-cloud,
Indifferent to its rising wrath:
Scorning the shelter of the rock—
Shrinks not, but dares the hail-storm's shock;
Or in some wind-worn crevice laid,
A granite cushion for his head,
Proof 'gainst the blast, unharm'd by cold,
Alike from fear and sorrow free;
His rough-bed freedom's vantage-hold,
His shade the wings of liberty.

The riot of the heavens gone by,
Once more the sun relumes the sky,
And strikes the hill with burning glow,
While lightnings scorch the vales below.—
But the bold mountaineer defies
These fierce contentions of the skies:
Bounds from the earth with active spring,
And like the untamed forest-king,
Who quits his couch, uproused by rain,
Shaking the big drops from his mane.—
This mountain monarch leaves his lair,

Dashes the cold shower from his hair ;
 Unfearing tracks his prompt advance,
 Nor deigns to cast one backward glance.
 No dastard doubts may linger near
 The free born breeze that wantons here.
 Pure as the fine and subtle breath
 That sports o'er Erin's circling wave,
 Wafting to every reptile death,
 But health and welcome to the brave.

Such vigorous essence, pure and wild.
 Inhales the mountain's roving child ;
 But the best boast of Erin's pride,
 Soft, social joys, he cast aside.
 He owes no binding ties to man ;
 But such as he is, fiercely free—
 He scorns the jargon that would scan
 The different shades of rank's degree.
 To him all equal. By one proof
 He measures mind and body both.—
 Strength is his standard—far aloof
 He flings all goods of meaner growth,
 And judges by this general scale
 The lowly hind of Lasto's vale ;
 The somewhat civilized, who hark
 In the dull freedom of Venasque ;
 Polish'd or rustic ; vile or good ;
 Plebeian, noble, learned, rude,
 The beggar, wretch, or him who reigns
 Lord of Iberia's wide stretch'd plains—
 Feeble and false in every thing ;
 By force a patriot as by fraud a king !
 Such is the tide of thought that fills
 The wayward wanderer of the hills.
 Boundless as Nature's self he roves,
 And nature for her grandeur loves.
 No weakening power his passion stirs ;
 His friendships are with her and hers :
 Unknown to him each siren charm,
 Which lures the listening wretch to harm ;
 Those arts refined, which, meant to bless,
 Sink into sorrows and excess.
 His the bold intercourse that grows
 To greatness from the things it knows :
 His fellowship is grand and high ;
 He talks with tempests. The vast sky—
 The massive glacier, huge and hoar—
 The rushing blast—the torrent's roar—
 These his familiars, stern and strong :—
 He liaps in youth their lofty tongue,
 Grows in their spirit, takes their tone,
 And makes their attributes his own.
 Such sure was man's primeval state ;
 Like Nature, noble, wild, and great ;
 Meant for a monarch, not the slave
 Of self-born conquest ;—proudly brave
 With Lion look and eagle eye,
 Firm foot on earth, and thoughts on high.

So came the being, rudely grand,
 Warm-glowing from his maker's hand,
 So stalk'd in Eden's bowers, till sin,
 Damping his energies, crept in,
 And art entwined its chill caress
 To tame his godlike savageness.

It is not necessary to state how often the verses have been reconsidered and retouched, nor the exact time occupied in the first rough sketch; but the mountaineer was out of sight when I had finished; and luckily for me, a cottage was in view, where I made sure of a lodging for the night, which was not far distant. But before I quitted my resting place, I took out the schoolmistress's pamphlet: and fancying that I had, in even this one day, seen enough to give me a just notion of the people of Henry IV., I thought I was fitly prepared to read the account of his birth.

I found, on examining it, that what I got of the pamphlet was but a part of a whole. All that preceded or followed the subject of Henry's birth was torn away; but these few pages were perfect, and seemed from the conclusion to have been recently published. When I thought of turning it into English, I did not conceive myself bound to adhere very closely to the meagre sketch, nor the errors it contained; and I therefore made some most unmerciful interpolations. The reader being thus informed that I am not responsible for all of this trifle, will, I trust, make an equitable and candid distribution; viz. to place any thing that may please him to my credit, and give the merit of what he does not like to the French writer, on whose foundation my labors were built.

"Make haste, wife—I am just ready to set out. Make haste, make haste!"

At the voice of her impatient husband, the good wife called her son and grand-son to receive the orders of the old man. The son came first. "Joseph, you will remain all night upon the hill, until you see the flame glowing on the towers of the royal chateau. You will then light the faggots which are ready prepared, that the whole valley may learn at once that a child is born to our good king. You know, a single fire announces a girl: three—ah! if it was but a boy! woe to the Spaniards! our beautiful Navarre would not be long in their hands. But now our king is old, and the husband of his daughter sheds, in the service of Henry II., that blood which should be poured out in conquering the paternal estates. And the Princess Jeanne! why, with all the courage of a man, oh! why is she a woman?"

Joseph set out for the hill, and Enriot waited for his grandfather to speak again. "My child," said the old man, after a long pause, "you are to-day twenty years of age. To-day I should like to present you to your king:—you must come with me." The lad trembled with joy; the grandsire went on. "Wife, give me my arms—those which I carried in our last battle against the Spaniards. Alas!"

it is a long time since then. I that day had the glory of shielding with my body my wounded king." The dame obeyed the order; the arms were taken out of the family chest, and the old man brought them to the door of the cottage. The sun was sinking behind the hills, and threw a stream of dazzling light upon these relics of the veteran's glory. They were brilliant, for he took a pride in keeping off the ravages of rust. He placed the glittering helmet upon his head; a battered cuirass covered his broad and manly chest; in his leathern belt he hung the broad-sword which had parried the stroke meant for his monarch's life; and lastly, he flung across his shoulders the scarlet cloak, on which were embroidered, in blue worsted, the two cows—the arms of Bearn.

Enriot was quickly prepared. A graceful cap half hid his long, brown hair; an open vest, loose breeches, woolen stockings, embroidered in different colors, and worked by his mother's hands, with thick shoes, completed his dress. In one hand he lightly balanced the knotted staff, which served for support in climbing the hills. The other carried a small basket, into which his grandfather had put a piece of coarse bread, a clove of garlic, freshly gathered and a bottle of old wine of Jurancon.

After the old man had reminded the women to take to their prayers the moment the bells should announce the commencing labor of the princess, and cautioned them to pray strongly for a boy, he and Enriot set out. For several days the whole district had awaited with anxiety this important event. Rising in the morning, they thought it impossible that it could be delayed till night; and many a sound-sleeping peasant had been startled from his rest, during the week just passed, with fancied tinglings from the steeple of Pau—while some, amongst whom was Ibarria, for so the old man was named, made regular daily pilgrimages to the castle gates. The result of these expeditions had been hitherto only disappointment, but a new dream every night promised *positive* intelligence for the following day. He moreover remembered well, that when he was a stripling, full half a century before, a reputed magician had foretold, that the day on which he had a grandson twenty years old would be the proudest day he had ever known. That might, to be sure, have been the case from natural feeling alone, unconnected with the birth of princes; but Ibarria insisted that there was something great woven into the prophecy: and this day being also the day of full moon, he reckoned with a certainty, in which he was borne out by the opinions of all the old women around, that the Princess Jeanne was to become that day the mother of a race of kings.

Ibarria, having served for a long period in the body guard of the king Navarre, had accompanied his master in his retirement to Pau. The grateful monarch had given to his old soldier a house at Jurancon, and had appointed him to the care of the royal vineyards. There this faithful follower, in his honorable trust, passed his quiet days; recounting to his children the virtuous and courageous actions of the master whom he loved so well. He nourished in their breasts two powerful passions—affection for his prince, and hatred of his foes. He had long indulged the expectation of seeing his king reconquer

Pampeluna, but it was nearly dissipated, when the situation of the Princess Jeanne awoke his slumbering ideas, and flattered his ancient hopes. He waited with impatience the promised infant, the anticipated redressor of his master's wrongs.

There never was a people more devoted to their sovereign than were the people of Bearn. There was a noble frankness in the character of the old monarch that associated admirably with their own. They loved him as a father; and his daughter shared their hearts with him. The circumstance of her having first felt the movements of the child within her bosom while in camp with her husband in Picardy, amidst the sound of drums and trumpets, flattered their warlike superstition; and they had with one voice settled (and it was prophetic) that this forthcoming child was to be first a boy, and then a hero. Animated by this joyful hope, they waited the announcement of a prince with that respectful confidence inspired by faith in the goodness of the All-wise.

It was now the commencement of winter; but it was one of those winters into which the warm farewell of the departing season blends, as does the brilliant green with the dusky purple of a rainbow; when the trees retain their leaves beyond their wonted time, and a casual nightingale is still heard to pour his melody upon the last traces of the dying year. The heavens still kept their serenity, and the earth its verdure; and the day seemed ruled by the lingering spirit of autumnal mildness.

As the travellers pursued their route, after evening had closed in, Ibarria had taken up his favorite strain; he was talking of the wisdom of the king, and the virtues of the princess. It was the first time, perhaps, that Enriet had listened to his grandfather with a forced attention, for they were close upon the dwelling of the venerable and gallant Franke. "Let us quit the road and take the mountain-path," said the old man suddenly, on perceiving the chestnut-trees which shaded the roof of his ancient fellow-soldier. "The way will be longer, but my heart will not throb with indignation against the perfidious friend who betrayed my confidence. My rage surprises you, perhaps. Listen to me, child! Learn, that before I married my good wife, whom God bless and preserve! I had long loved a young maiden of the vale of Mais. Franke was my friend—became my rival—and, during my absence in the wars, possessed himself of her for whom I would have given my life. Oh, but she was good and handsome! You have seen her grand-daughter Laurinette? She is her very image. You must have remarked her—is she not lovely?"

Enriet made an inclination of the head, for he *had* remarked the girl. He followed his grandfather awhile in silence; but just as they came to a little grove of acacias, he cast a look among the trees, and coughed. Receiving no answer, he suddenly clapped his hand to his forehead and exclaimed, "What a head I have here! Dear grandfather, will you forgive me? I have left behind me the boddice which sister Catrine has worked for Mademoiselle de Montbrun, and which I so positively promised to take to Pau. I must step back for it."

"You must *not* step back for it, stupid boy!" said old Ibarria, sharply. "What, keep me waiting at a time like this, when all the

country is pressing to the castle—and for a paltry boddice, 'forsooth!" "But, consider, sir, it is meant to do honor to our princess, and the young prince she is *sure* to give us! And you know, my dear grandfather, that walk as fast as you will, I shall overtake you with ease before you reach the river."

This reasoning was conclusive with Ibarria, for he was fond of the notion of honoring the princess and the prince he was so *sure* of; and nothing was to him a trifle which tended to that point. Besides, he was proud of Enriot's agility, and loved to follow him with his eyes as he bounded along the mountain-paths, full as graceful, and almost as fleet, as the lizard which he chased from pic to pic.

"Go along then puppy!" cried Ibarria—and Enriot was in a moment at full speed.

Laurinette, whom Enriot had *remarked*, was at this identical moment in one of her most peevish and fretful moods; but her peevishness had something so gentle and bewitching in it, that it was often preferred to other people's good humor. Her temper, was now, however, tried to the utmost, for Franke, her grandfather, had made her sit down to her usual evening's task of reading him to sleep; but, by an uncommon perversity, had not begun to doze at the second or third page, as was his regular custom. Laurinette turned her eyes oftener towards a little *acacia grove*, visible from the window, than she fixed them upon the old history of the Kings of Navarre. The breaks which she thus made in the narrative kept up the attention of the old man, defeating her own object, and the natural effects of the narrative itself.

She thus went on for some time, but was at last on the point of losing all command of herself, for she saw the moonlight slowly mixing with the gray vapors that covered the mountain tops; and she would certainly have burst into tears had not her grandfather begun to nod in his chair, and in a moment more given a nasal notice that he was fast asleep. Laying down her book, she was preparing to steal towards the door, when a voice, not new to her, warbled from the garden the following

RUSTIC SERENADE.

I.

Laurinette dear, the sun is down,
His last glance fades on the mountain's peak;
And the drooping heads of the herbage brown,
Are faintly tinged with his yellow streak.
The moisten'd foliage warmly weeps;
Still is the villagers' evening hum;
Nature is hush'd, and echo sleeps—
Laurinette dear to thy lover come!

II.

Mark in the eastern heavens a light
That shines on the flowers which the dews have wet;
'Tis the wakening glance of the queen of night,

And, slothful girl! thou comest not yet.
 The nightingale warbles his notes of love,
 Perch'd on the quivering branches high,
 While the fluttering leaves might be thought to move
 In time to his moonlight melody.

III.

The rivulets gush from the mountain springs
 To freshen the still warm breath of the vale;
 Zephyr is out on his silvery wings,
 And pleasure is floating abroad on the gale.
 But pleasure, and beauty, and music, all
 To the heart of the lover are bill and dumb,
 While the maiden he dotes on slights his call.
 Then Laurinette dear to thy lover come!

The echo to this last line was a sweet embrace from the lips of the lovely girl; and Enriot forgot for a moment all else in the world. It will be divined by the reader that this young couple had been a long time very good friends, unknown to their grandsires, whose enmity had kept them asunder. It will probably be suspected too, that the asserted forgetfulness of the boddice was wholly a fabrication of the amorous Enriot. Such was the truth; for the boddice had been snugly deposited in his bosom on his leaving home, and had he but had a glimpse of Laurinette in passing the acacia grove, he would not have been forced to the falsehood. As it was, I hope it will be held venial in such a good cause, without any serious injury to religion or morals.

The stolen interview was as rapid as lightning, and as brilliant too. The moment it lasted it might be called a drop of "the essence of time." The hearts of the lovers was the alembic in which it was doubly distilled; and its fragrance had not evaporated when Enriot rejoined his grandfather at half a league's distance from the house of Franke. "Well, sir, I have caught you," cried he, panting for breath. "You are a good boy," replied the old man, and they went silently on.

The birth-day of an heir is joyous for a family. How glorious for a kingdom is the birth-day of a sovereign! Hardly were the first strokes of the bells heard by the anxious inhabitants of Pau, than they rushed out to inquire the news. The lively sounds spread quickly over the plain, through which the Gave winds tranquilly along.—They struck upon the ears of Ibarria and Enriot, just as they had reached the rising grounds which stretch before the town and towers of Pau. They had both been for some time silent. Ibarria's thoughts had swept over a space nearly as extensive as is allotted to the life of man—had dwelt awhile on his early hours—then rushed back to present days—and ended by subsiding into mental prayers for a prince. Enriot was thinking of something else.

"On, on, my boy! we loiter. I would not for my whole vintage be too late." They hurried up the ascent. The straining eyes of the old man would have penetrated the hill. Enriot burned with impatience, but slackened his steps to keep pace with his grandsire. At

last the fuller sounds of the bells came unobstructed on their ears; they reached the summit; and the whole enchanting panorama, lit by the full moon burst upon their sight.

The Spanish proverb says that "they have seen nothing who have not seen Seville." How little have they seen who have not seen Pau! Its lovely sloping hill covered with gardens and vineyards: its neat buildings, rising in gradations of beauty, and reposing in masses of verdure; its proud and glittering castle towering over all, with white flags floating salutation to the rivers, the forests, the mountains!—But who can describe it? O no one.—It is one of those views to be seen and felt; when the mind is raised by the contemplation of nature's magnificence; and the heart softened by the fullness of her bounty.

Ibarria and Enriot had many a time viewed this scene; but they stopped, even now, awhile in involuntary admiration, and gazed upon it till a dark cloud, covering the face of the moon, robbed the landscape of its lustre, and warned them to proceed. The bells are still ringing; they have now a downhill path, and they gain upon the road. But just as they reach the borders of the river, and at the instant that they put their first step upon the bridge, the bells suddenly cease, and a fire bursts high from the castle's central tower. The travellers stop short—their expectant eyes are fixed upon the other towers. Let the imagination fancy their appearance.—Their quickened pulse, and breath arrested—their gazing countenances, flushed cheeks, and flowing hair—their picturesque attire—their graceful figures!

Thus they stood for some seconds, every one of which appeared an hour. "But one fire—but *one* grandfather?" asked, rather than exclaimed, Enriot. "Great God, thy will be done!" cried the old man. The suspense continued—it was intolerable. They could not have borne it longer, when a little gleam spread flickering on the western turret, and in an instant the combustible matter shot upwards its flames upon the sky. Another fire, on the corresponding turret, completed the signal for a boy; and salvos of artillery roared out.—The shouts of enthusiastic thousands joined the joyous chorus; and the hills sent on from crag to crag reverberations of the sounds.

Where are the travellers? Ah! behold them—on their knees their heads uncovered; their hands clasped together, and raised towards Heaven; their eyes fixed towards the blazing signals; their cheeks streaming with tears!

They are soon again upon their feet, and quickly ascend the rapid path which leads from the river to the castle. They pause but one moment to look back towards home, hoping to see their little signal-fire. They turn their heads, and do see their signal-fire, no doubt—but it is in vain that they would hope to distinguish it amongst a hundred blazing from the summit of a hundred hills.

They reached the castle. The portcullus was raised, the draw-bridge down, and no guards were seen to obstruct the rush of the crowd. The court-yard was already filled when Ibarria and Enriot arrived. The uniform of the old soldier, his respectable character, as well as the well-known friendship of the king, were all so many causes for clearing a way for his approach. He penetrated through

the crowd, and directed his steps to the private stair-case, by which he was privileged to enter, leaving the grand approach to the thousands who were, for the first time promiscuously admitted. As he mounted the steps, followed by Enriot, a strain of music seemed to invite his approach. Instead of the plaintive cries which he expected to have heard, he distinguished an old song of the country, and was surprised at any one venturing to sing at such a time. The air was one of mingled tenderness and solemnity, and the words were pronounced in a feeble and tremulous tone. Fatigued by his long walk, and by the height of the stair-case, Ibarria stopped awhile to recover breath. Enriot stood wrapped in astonishment and awe; and they heard the following

SONG OF THE PRINCESS JEANNE *

I.

Sing! for the voice of the newly born
Falls in sweet sounds on the mother's ear;
Like the sun-beam mix'd with the cloud of morn,
On her cheek is a blended smile and tear.

II.

The vows of her lover, her husband's kiss,
Were dear when in joy's young hour she smiled;
But feeble and faint to her matron bliss
As she clasps to her bosom her first-born child.

III.

When the child is a man, to the battle field
He will follow his father the foe to meet;
And if victory's pride lay his foeman's shield,
With a high-throbbing heart, at his mother's feet!

During the last stanza of the song Ibarria and Enriot had reached the head of the stairs. The door before them was open and unguarded. They hesitated an instant whether they should enter or not, and interchanged looks of mutual uncertainty. While thus silently, mentally debating, a woman, from the apartment within, perceiving them, ran forward, and exclaimed in a transport of joy, "Come in, come in; he is born!" She drew them along, and led them to the chamber of the princess, where they had been preceded by a multitude admitted without distinction or inquiry.

* Jeanne d'Albret wishing to see her father's will, he promised to show it to her, "A condition que dans l'enfantement elle luy chanteroit une chanson 'afin,' luy dit il, 'que tu ne me fasses pas un enfant pleureux et rechigne.' La Princesse le luy promit, et eut tant de courage, que malgre les grandes douleurs qu'elle souffroit, elle luy tint parole; et en chanta une en son langage Bernois."—*Hist du Roy Henry le Grand, par de Peresixe*, t. i. p. 1b.

Notwithstanding this authority of the Bishop of Rhodex, it will be observed that I have made the princess sing *after* the birth.

The old monarch was leaning over his daughter's bed. He took the infant from her arms, and raising it in his own, he turned towards the crowd, and showing it to all, he cried aloud, "You see it is a boy!" It was at this moment that Ibarria taking from his grandson's basket the clove of garlic and the wine, presented them to the king, who kindly smiled, on recognizing his old preserver. The monarch himself then rubbed the clove of garlic to the infant's lips and having poured a little of the wine into a goblet, he offered it to the child. He drank it with avidity, and without uttering a cry; and, as though his imperfect vision had acquired its powers, he turned round the circle his half-open eyes.

"What is his name?" asked a voice. Another exclaimed, "Call him Henry, after his grandfather!" "Be it so, said the old king; and all cried, "Long live Henry!" The crowd which waited on the staircase, in the halls, the chambers, and the court-yard, echoed the cry thus sent forth; and the sound of its genuine honesty would have been a good lesson for the venal and the factious, who sometimes open out their roaring throats.

The monarch caused a window to be thrown wide, and advanced upon the balcony. A tear of joy trickled down his hollowed cheek. The child which he carried in his arms seemed, to the admiring crowd, to wear a smile upon his unconscious lips; and his little hand, which was entangled in the grey beard of his grandsire, they would have it was playing there by design. The old king held up towards Heaven this son which it had bestowed upon his people; and making a sign that he would speak, an immediate silence succeeded the buzz which had prevailed in the crowd. "A child is born to all," said he. "He will love you as I love you." Observing near him an old soldier of Navarre, who could not restrain his tears, "Be joyous and happy, my gallant friend," added he, with a tone and bearing that seemed like inspiration. "My Land has brought forth a Lion!"*

A burst of acclamation and delight, still louder than the former, welcomed these words of the monarch. Every approach to the chamber of the princess was then thrown open by his orders, that all might come and gaze upon the child—the hope of his race.

There was in the castle a large tortoise-shell, which some sailors of Bayonne had formerly found on a distant shore, and which they had presented to the princess as one of the curious productions of the sea. This shell was placed in a large hall adjoining the chamber of the princess, and it was in this extraordinary and unostentatious cradle that the old Henry placed his new-born namesake. "I choose," said he, "that he should sleep in a cradle the gift of my people; he who will one day be called on to wake and watch over their welfare." The crowd rushed once more round the infant prince, and all admir-

* "Les Espagnols avoient dit autrefois par raillerie sur la naissance de la mere de notre Henry, "Miracle! la vache a fait une brebis," entendent par ce mot de vache, la Reine Marguerite, sa mere, car ils l'appelloient ainsi, et son mary, le vacher, faisant allusion aux armes de Bearn, qui sont deux vaches. Le Roy Henry se souvenant de cette froide raillerie des Espagnols, disoit de joye, "Voyez maintenant, ma brebis a enfante un Lion!" —DE PEREFIXE, t. i. p. 17.

ed his strength and beauty. The child was not at all alarmed at the concourse—a thing little extraordinary in one just born, but which the people chose to consider a miracle, as if some early instinct made him already distinguish that he was in the midst of his devoted subjects.

Ibarria took this opportunity of approaching the monarch, holding Enriot by the hand. "At this moment of general devotion," said he, "my sovereign will not disdain the offering of his faithful servant." Then kneeling, with Enriot beside him, "Here, my liege, I give you this full-grown lad to be the honest follower of this noble infant, as I have been to your majesty." The king, putting his hand on Enriot's head, said solemnly, "I bless you, my worthy lad. Grow up in the steps of your gallant grandsire, and a better blessing—that of Heaven—will be with you! And now, Ibarria, you must return me kind for kind. Here, give thy blessing to this child. The benediction of fidelity and courage must bring good luck with it."

Ibarria, with a half-diffident yet affecting solemnity, approached the cradle. He contemplated the child for some time in silence, then bending on one knee he cried, "I bless thee, noble infant, hope of the people! Thou wilt be brave, for thy mother felt thee bounding in her bosom in the middle of a camp. Thou wilt be good, for thou wilt resemble thy grandsire. Thou wilt be just, for thou wilt follow his counsel and example. Thou wilt be the joy of thy people, for cries of gladness, and not tears, have awaited on thy birth! Be blest, then, royal child! In thee finishes the name of Albret—in thee begins the name of Bourbon. May this glorious name become more famous than all the names of kings; and may God accord to thee and thy posterity the favors reserved for his well-beloved!"

Then, drawing his long rapier, Ibarria touched the cradle with the blade. "Now it is consecrated," said he, placing the sword in the hands of Enriot. "You will carry it to defend him, since age disables me." But Enriot knew nought of this appeal. From the moment that he felt the royal hand upon his head, both sense and feeling seemed to have abandoned their throne. He remained fixed on his knees, his eyes fastened on the floor, his neck bent low, and his arms crossed upon his breast. He was aroused from his waking trance by the rough jokes of his young companions, who had formed a circle round him; and starting up, confused and ashamed, he hurried after his grandfather, whom he saw slowly making his way through the crowd. Enriot confessed, in many an after day, that the memory of this moment—when the dreams of wealth and ambition had made him forget awhile humility and love—was his best preservative against the temptations which many a time assailed him during life.

Returning towards Jurancon, Enriot wished to lead his father from the high road, by the path they had followed in going to Pau. "No," said the old man, "my heart is filled with joy; and there is no room for hatred to find a place there." He then walked straight up to the house of Franke, pushed open the door without knocking, and entered the kitchen. This unlooked-for visit astonished Franke and his granddaughter, who were sitting by the fire, late at it was, conversing with some of their happy neighbors on the subject of the aus-

picious birth. Franke got up, and advanced towards Ibarria, whom he did not at first recognize. "Franke," said the latter with a faltering voice, and taking him by the hand, "we are old enemies—but older friends. I forget everything now but our early regard. The birth of this prince should reunite all good royalists, who may perhaps require this union when the child is big enough to lead them to battle. Alas! I forget my years. No matter. Franke, we were once friends—let us be so again, and always!"

The warm-hearted and generous Franke threw himself into Ibarria's arms, exclaiming, "Oh! why is she not alive to see this happy hour? She, who was till death your truest friend!"

While the old men embraced each other, the whole circle around them shed tears of joy at the reconciliation. The news spread quickly over the neighborhood. Enriot who had *remarked* Laurinette, married her amidst blessings and rejoicings; and it is even said that, to this day, their descendants are prouder of tracing their ancestry up to such a couple, than of the worldly distinction which has followed a long course of industry and virtue.

NOTE.

If any doubt existed as to the justice of this eulogy on the character of the people of the Pyrenees, the recent civil war in the Basque provinces must, to say the least, have removed it. The cause *they* fought for was the good old cause—the defence of the popular privileges handed down from their ancestors, and unfortunately violated by the too sweeping action of the Spanish Constitution. It was matter of deep regret that the resistance of this noble people was sullied by being identified with the rebellion of Don Carlos and his adherents. Even now it would be most difficult to remove the stain; yet we must hope that History will place the subject in its true light; showing that while the bigot usurper was defeated in his treason, the patriots of whose valor he availed himself gained, even in his failure, their own object. The princely marauder being driven out of Spain, and the rights of the bold peasantry confirmed by their true sovereign, a long futurity of prosperous civilization may be looked for in those uncorrupted regions; but many an age must pass over before the simplicity and energy which form the foundations of the mountain char-

acter can degenerate, under influences of which they are beyond the reach.

Since the time of my first visit to the country of Bearn, a tide of English *tourism*, if I may be allowed to coin a word, has overflowed it. The beautiful town of Pau, which in those days contained no British or Irish inhabitants, was very soon afterwards colonized by two or three families of my acquaintance, attracted by my descriptions, from distant districts of the South of France. These being followed by others in rapid succession, the birth-place of Henry IV. and its neighborhood has become a favorite sojourn of my fellow countrymen; and it is pleasant to me, after so long a lapse of time and at so great a distance, to revert to those delightful scenes, with the feeling that many a friend has trod in the steps which I was one of the first to trace, and that the light records of my adventures formed for some of them an impulse and a guide.

Several very interesting works, in French and English, descriptive of the Pyrenees, have been published *since my time*—for this edition of my own volumes is, after all, but a revival of old stories, which belong to another day. All have confirmed and borne witness to the truth of my sketches, and some of them have contained engraved illustrations of many of the scenes described in this and subsequent stories. But it is not alone the Author or the Artist who have sought the picturesque among the pics and valleys of those celebrated scenes. The stream of fashionable travelling has actually taken them under its patronage; and they have been condescendingly held up by even patrician tourists, as very interesting rivals to the Alps and Apennines.

The famous political aphorism of Louis XIV., *il n'y a plus de Pyrénées*, turned out to be as false as it was boastful. Steam power, more solid than his despotism, has almost proved, geographically, *qu'il n'y a plus d'Atlantique*. It is, at any rate, easier to cross the ocean now than it was to traverse the mountains twenty years ago; and the dis-

tance between the old world and the new being lessened by a month or more, we on "the seaboard" of Massachusetts may, perhaps, look for visitors as frequently from the Pyrenees as from the Alleghanies. Could time be retrospectively annihilated, as easily as space is reduced or mastered, the latter range of mountains might, ere long, be the scene of some new ramblings of the "Walking Gentleman." As it is, he fears he must limit his ambition to less elevated pursuits, and more useful walks of life. But memory and imagination are happily independent of time and space, and even when laboring in the lowlands, we can be wafted, by one or the other, backwards or forwards to the high places of the Earth. So, leaving my readers to make *their* choice between the past and the future, I turn the page upon the hills and open a new one in the Landes.

THE

EXILE OF THE LANDES.

With great courage and elevation of sentiment, he told the court that "the crime of which he stood accused was not a deed performed in a corner; the sound of it had gone forth to most nations; * * * that for no temporal advantage would he offer injury to the poorest man or woman that stood upon the earth; * * * and that he had still through every danger, held fast his principles and his integrity."

HUME'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND, vol. vii. p. 356.



THE EXILE OF THE LANDES.

Every body has heard of the Landes of Gascony, and many of my countrymen have traversed them in their route from Paris to the Pyrenees; but few who have not seen them, or similar tracts, can form a notion of these monotonous solitudes.

Being unwilling to infringe on the rights of my brother scribblers, who dress up their loose thoughts in the form of tours and travels, I shall not enter into regular description, or details of distances. I shall content myself with saying, that the Landes stretch from the Gironde to the Adour, between north and south—are washed by the bay of Biscay on the west—and lose themselves to the eastward, by insensibly mingling with the fertile plains of Aire and Villeneuve de Marsan. A gazetteer and a map will tell the rest.

Extensive pine-woods cover this ocean of sands. Here and there a hut or a hamlet forms the centre of a patch of green, on which troops of ragged sheep or goats are seen to browse; while the unmeaning look of the being who attends them marks his mental affinity to the flock, as his sheep-skin mantle gives him an external similitude.

I left Bordeaux to explore these wastes, on a summer's morning, when the first beams of day were opening on the heavens; and the birds were shaking off the drowsiness of night, stretching out their little wings and arranging their ruffled plumage—with the coquetry of a fine lady, settling her dishevelled ringlets, or the trimming of her cap.

It was then that I was forcibly struck with the belief that vanity was not peculiar to mankind: that the prancing of the steed, the strut of the cock, and the contortions of the monkey, were but some of those gradatory shades exhibited by poor mortality from pride to dandyism. Be it so! thought I; let the brute creation rival the *genus homo*, and share with us another of our privileges. God knows we often meet them half-way in coming to a level!

I was roused from the train of thought which followed these re-

fections, on finding my progress impeded by the nature of the soil I trod on. I was wading through sand, having wandered into one of the by-roads, which branch off in a hundred directions, on the borders of the Landes. I made an effort to reconnoitre my position, but with little success. Around me, on every side, were tall pines. No vista showed me the track I had travelled, for the road had wound, in most irregular meanderings, into this forest. Above was the dark blue sky, and below the sandy soil, deep and parched by the meridian sun. I was for a moment a little embarrassed, but I soon recovered myself. I first looked at poor Ranger's discontented face, but got no information there. He was stretched panting at the foot of a fir-tree, and his eyes were turned on me, as if asking for refreshment or consolation.

Having utterly lost my way, I had only to remark the direction of my shadow on the ground, and, making towards an opening which allowed this observation, I quickly discovered that it pointed towards the east. Knowing that the sea lay in a contrary direction, I was satisfied, and went onwards, without fear of retracing my steps; and coming in a little while to a scanty patch of herbage, I sat down upon it, and produced from my wallet my stock of cold meat and bread.

After our repast which the want of water made rather defective, Ranger and myself seemed inspired alike with fresh vigor. We set out again; and while he made some circular excursions in the wood, fruitlessly hoping to light on a rivulet or a covey, I plodded onward in whatever path presented itself on my route.

I calculated on falling in with some straggling village or hut, where I might repose for the night, if I found it impracticable to reach La Teste, a little town on the coast, to which I was more immediately bound. As I relapsed into my reverie, I forgot myself again; and I sauntered onwards in this mood, until the sun had sunk in a misty and threatening sky. The earth was overhung with clouds, and a wind of evil omen swept gloomily across the desert, and shook the branches of the dark tall pines. I began now, in good earnest, to look about me, and increasing my speed in a straight-forward direction, I reached, in about half an hour, the extremity of the wood in which I had so long wandered. My path opened out into an almost boundless plain, but I saw at first no habitation nor living object. I felt excessively fatigued, from the heavy sandy soil through which I had all day labored. I was also a second time hungry, and I had besides some inquietudes for Ranger. Those woods abound with wolves; and if night had actually closed in before I got to shelter, we might both have been in jeopardy.

While I thus communed with myself, I marked, on the dusky horizon, two figures of gigantic height, which I at first thought two isolated fir trees bending to the blast; but their motion soon betrayed them to be no inanimate production, as with long and rapid strides they were quickly crossing the waste. Determined to bring them to, I discharged one barrel of my gun. They stopped; and, as I concluded that they turned towards me, I quickly fired off the other, and then shouted with all my might, at the same time making to-

wards them. They perceived me, and strided to meet me, with a speed at once ridiculous and appalling; and I may safely say, that since Gulliver was in Brobdingnag, no traveller had reason to think less of himself.

As they approached, I saw them to be men mounted on monstrous high stilts, and I then recollected the accounts I had read and heard of the shepherds of the Landes. These were the first specimens which had come within my observation; and I had, in my abstraction, quite forgotten what I might so naturally have looked for.

When these singular beings neared me, I discerned every particular detail of their appearance and costume. The latter was composed of a coarse woollen jacket and breeches, loose at the knees. A round worsted cap, such as is worn by the Aberdeenshire shepherd, was placed on the head. Long masses of lank black hair flowed over the shoulders, covered with a cloak of sheepskin. Their legs were defended with rude gaiters of the same, and an uncouth caricature of sandals was fastened to their feet. They both carried long poles, to aid their march and keep them steady; and they each actually held in their clumsy hands a coarse stocking, and a set of knitting rods (I cannot call them needles;) thus putting art and industry in the only light in which they could appear a mockery.

They were both about the middle age, if I might form a judgment from their bushy beards and furrowed cheeks; but as to their dispositions, capabilities, or propensities (which some theorists are so fond of discovering at a glance,) I could not even guess. They had faces fit for the study of Lavater: no one else could have made any thing of them.

When they came near me, they made a full stop. I accosted them in French, and asked if they could direct me to an inn, which I understood was somewhere in those parts.

A negative shake of the head was their reply.

I next demanded if I was near La Teste?

The answer was repeated.

I then begged them to inform me whether there was any cottage at hand, where I might obtain shelter?

A positive "no" seemed shaken from each silent head.

I thought this the acme of inhospitality, and so unlike what I had met hitherto in the country, that I could scarcely credit my senses; the immovable and petrifying unsociability of the faces I gazed on confirmed the worst, and I wished for a moment that I were with a couple of Boudoin Arabs, in their native deserts.

During our short conversation, of which I had all the words, and they the eloquence (as far as it lies in action) I could not trace a change of muscle or variation of expression in their countenances. To finish the fruitless and uncomfortable conference, I rather abruptly asked them where I was?

A silent shake of the head left me as wise as before.

It was not till then that I began to suspect, what my intelligent readers will by this time, no doubt be sure of—that the poor shepherds did not comprehend one word of my discourse. No sooner did

this notion strike me, than I strung together such words of Gascon as I had picked up during my sojourn in the Perigord; but it was now quite as useless as French had been; and I had a new proof of the truth, that in this part of France each district has its *patois* perfectly distinct, and scarcely to be understood by the inhabitants of parts almost adjacent. I was thus at length reduced to that universal and natural language, in which fingers supplied the use of tongues, and gestures that of sounds. I pointed out, by every possible intimation, my wants of eating and repose. Bless your bright intellects! thought I, as one of them gave me a significant, assenting nod, which was silently echoed by the pate of his companion. They then muttered something to each other; and, fulfilling the strict forms of desert etiquette, they advanced in mincing strides, beckoning me to follow their guidance.

Ranger and I gladly took the hint. Our conductors moderated their pace; we increased ours, and thus contrived to produce a harmony of movement. I shall not weary the reader with a detail of our march for the first half hour, which was beguiled by the shepherds, by a communication in their own peculiar jargon, and by Ranger and his master in the selfsame way.

As we went on, in a westwardly direction, the wind blew fiercely, but not freshly, in our faces. It was hot and smothering. The laboring skies seemed preparing to discharge their overloaded breasts, and distant thunder rolled along the horizon, still reddened by the departed sun. The masses of clouds which came upon the earth quickly shut out the day, and rose at opposite extremities into huge mountains of vapor. They were illuminated by fitful flashes of lightning, and looked like giant batteries erected in the heavens.—As they rushed onwards from the west, they shot down vivid streams, which at times pierced to the very earth, like quivering blades of fire. Again the electric fluid took a horizontal direction through the skies; and its dazzling streak fluttered like a radiant streamer, till it lost itself among the clouds. Darkness came on with a suddenness such as I had never before observed, and the gusts of wind were terrific. They swept across the waste like floods of air, lashing the sands like waves, and bearing down all before them. Every single-standing tree within our sight was shivering into atoms; but the crash, when these whirlwinds met the opposition of the pine woods, baffles description. It appeared as if whole chasms were rent away in the forest; and between each blast we heard the howling of the wolves, terrified at the storm, or probably wounded by the shattered branches, and angry with the element which must have dashed them at intervals to the earth.

As for me, my guides, and my poor dog, we were in the opening of the tempest repeatedly thrown to the ground. The shepherds were early obliged to quit their stilts, and I found them in every way on a level with me. Their experience furnished them no resource that I had not at hand; and when at length a desperate gust whirled us round like spinning-tops, I flung myself prostrate on the sands; one hand encircling Ranger, who clung trembling to my bosom, and the other grasping the stem of a newly-shattered fir-tree. The shepherds followed my example, and throughout the whole scene showed less presence of mind than stupid apathy.

This magnificent and awful war of nature continued about twenty minutes. The wind then dropped suddenly still, as if forced from the heavens by the torrents of rain which poured upon us. We raised ourselves up, and the shepherds pursued their course. They mounted again upon their stilts, and I followed their track. Reiterated claps of thunder burst directly over our heads, and the broad lightnings gleamed in liquid sheets through the sea of rain which every cloud cast down.

I was nearly overpowered with fatigue, for the wet and sand was to me almost impassable; while my wooden-legged companions found but little obstruction from it. My delight may then be imagined when I saw them stop suddenly before a house, which the darkness of the night prevented my observing, till we were actually against its wall. They shouted together, and the door was cautiously half-opened by a woman with a resin-taper in her hand.

At the welcome prospect of the open door, our whole party made a simultaneous rush for entrance. Ranger, who was the first on the threshold, had scarcely put his foot there when a huge shaggy dog, of a breed peculiar to the Landes, darted upon him, seized him by the throat, and tossed him to the ground. I used, for a while, every effort to tear the ruffian from his hold, and called vociferously to the woman to take him off; but the demand being unheeded or unheard, I cocked my gun, and by a desperate threat (which the drenched state of the piece made probably very harmless) I strove to alarm the house for the safety of its guardian. I saw several men seated within, who took my appeal with indifference; and, resolved in my rage to attempt the perpetration of my threat, I was in the act of putting my finger to the trigger, when my arm was forcibly seized from behind, and I, at the same time, thus accosted: "Young man, what would you do? Shoot that animal and you are sure to die upon the spot!"

"Let me go," cried I, with impatience; "my dog is strangling in the gripe of that monster—by heavens! I'll——;" but before my sentence was finished, the savage had loosed his hold, and was fawning at the foot of the man who had spoken to me.

A word from him had saved Ranger, his assailant, and, if this stranger was to be believed, perhaps myself. Ranger crouched between my legs, as I reproached the man for keeping a dog so dangerous. He calmly replied, "The dog is not mine—but he only did his duty. He belongs to the people of this house; and the group within would certainly have revenged any harm done to him. Permit me to say you are now in a region where prudence is a useful virtue."

There was a tone of softness and benevolence in this address; and the light from the house showed me his figure as he spoke. He was tall, and wrapped in a large blue Spanish cloak, fastened at the collar with a silver clasp. He wore a handsome fur cap. His face was quite in unison with his voice—dignified and tender.

I was much struck with his appearance and manner; and expressed my thanks for his interference, and for the service he had done me.

"Ah! sir," said he, "you know not how much I owe a life of servitude to mankind. This poor deed weighs light in the balance against a load of crime."

He seized my hand as he said this, and pressed it hard, without seeming to know what he did. He as suddenly let it drop—started back—pulled his cap upon his brow—muffled himself in his cloak and turned from me.

"Good God, sir!" cried I, "you are not surely going out in this dreary night?"

"Yes, sir, I am," replied he sternly, "and let me see who dares to follow me!"

I stared after him, but he was lost in the darkness. I felt a thrill of curiosity, admiration, and, I believe, awe; but I turned in a moment, and entered the house.

CHAPTER II.

My first impulse was to address the woman, whose bursting mein pronounced her to be mistress of the mansion; while the whole decoration of the kitchen, in which I stood, stamped upon the house itself the joyous character of an inn. To my rapid question of "Who was the gentlemen that had just gone out?" I got at first no reply. The hostess eyed me from head to foot, with an unflattering and suspicious look. The four or five rough fellows near the fire stood up and gathered round me. I appeared not to heed their curiosity and persisted for the gratification of my own. I repeated my question.

"And pray, friend," asked the hostess, "what business is that of yours? Who are you? A spy, perhaps, sent here to entrap a better man."

"It seems so,"—"like enough," and other such expressions, were echoed from the group by which I was encircled; and I saw there was no friendly feeling towards me breeding among the party. "Foreigner!" and "Englishman!" and "*sacre*" and "*peste*!" and exclamations of like import were sent mutteringly around; and, knowing that prevention is easier than cure, I thought it wise to avert a storm which I might not be able to allay. Assuming, therefore, an air of frankness and confidence, which I never knew to fail, which I never saw even a gloomy group of Spaniards able to withstand, but which acts like a spell on the sociable disposition of the French, I told shortly my situation and pursuits. I convinced them that I was neither a spy nor an enemy; that my inquiries concerning the mysterious stranger proceeded from gratitude and good will;—and I was in five minutes seated down among them, quite one of themselves, and placed, by acclamation, in the warmest corner of the chimney. Similar regard was shown to Ranger, who stretched himself in great enjoyment before the crackling faggots, happily forgetful of the roughness of his first reception.

Many civilities were showered on me, in the shape of sundry articles of dress (my knapsack and its contents being wet through and through) drams from the brandy bottle, and innumerable kind speeches and offers of service.

Having got myself dry and warm, a craving appetite was next to be satisfied. I asked the good and handsome hostess what I could have; and she said that Bordeaux contained few delicacies which she could not give me as well. A long list of luxuries followed this assurance, and her tongue ran glibly over the niceties of a *traiteur's* ordinary cata-

logue. But, least I should be led away by hopes of these proffered dainties, one of the jovial fellows, who sipped a twopenny bottle of wine beside me, threw me a knowing wink, as much as to say that mine hostess had only a poetical license for offering the good things recapitulated; and that the ortolans, Bayonne ham, truffled turkies, and perigord pie, existed only in the larder of her imagination. As for me, this was but little disappointment, for my appetite could ill brook the delay of such high-sounding preparations; and my eye seemed to turn in natural humility to viands more homely, and more appropriate to the place.

Thanking the good lady, therefore, for the civil list with which she had been willing to cherish my expectations and regale my fancy, I begged her to give me a supper more suitable to present circumstances and pedestrian travellers. In a moment a coarse, but clean cloth and napkin graced my little table. A bottle of sour wine, a decanter of muddy water, a loaf of brown bread, full three feet in length, a salt-celler filled with salt, and another with pepper, a plate, a drinking-glass, a heavy, ill-formed silver fork and spoon, and a knife, which the clumsiest apprentice of Birmingham would be ashamed to own, were quickly scattered before me—in the fullest spirit of that want of order, which so peculiarly marks the preparations for a French repast.

My bustling landlady was aided in every thing by a rosy smooth-faced lass, in a close and stiff starched cap, blue bodice, and red woolen petticoat; and in a little while they placed on the table a small earthen tureen, whose brown exterior was not a shade more dark than the mass of soup which smoked within, and which sent up a savory fume, where the odor of garlic had a proud pre-eminence. An omelet of six eggs, mixed well with herbs of all varieties, was already in the frying-pan, and the plump brown arm of Cazille was stretched out to place it on the fire. The hostess's hand was in the act of cutting from a string of black puddings one whose dimensions seemed suited to a Patagonian mouth. I was preparing with my spoon to dive into the cloud-enveloped mysteries of this tureen, when all our operations were suspended, and all our attentions roused by the tramping of a horse, and a loud accompanying shout from a voice of stentorian tone.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the landlady, "it is Monsieur the inspector of the forests!"

Monsieur the inspector!—The inspector!—Inspector!—Spectre! was re-echoed by every mouth, from Cazille's down to my own, in all the gradations from surprise to inquiry. Ranger himself filled up the climax by a note, which might be something between admiration and interrogation. Every one started up and made towards the door, carrying with them all the candles and resin matches which the kitchen had alight. The string of black puddings dangled uncut upon the wall—the embryo omelet was upset into the fire—and the spoon-full of soup remained untasted in my hand.

This moment of awful suspense was followed by the entrance of the important personage, to whom such unconditional homage had been rendered by mistress and maid, man and beast, black pudding and omelet. Monsieur the inspector came bustling in, with that air of moistened dignity, which sits so naturally on a great man drenched with rain.

He was a broad set figure, with dusky skin and frizzled whiskers of

vast expansion. His huge jackboots, redoubled doubles of silk handkerchiefs, and a multitude of many collared coats, had been all unable to secure him from the wet. He streamed like a river god, from the rowls of his spurs up to the corner of his large cocked hat. In each hand he carried a pistol, and as he strode forward the fire, a long sabre rattled against the tiles of the floor.

He made his way over every obstacle, upsetting two chairs, a warming-pan and a basket of fish. Every one made way for him, so that he was not long in reaching the wide and comfortable hearth. It must not be supposed that all this was done in silent majesty—no such thing. Every step was accompanied by an exclamation, and every exclamation echoed by an oath.

"What a night of hell! * * *! What a rascally storm! * * *! What diabolical weather! * * *!"

The astericks stand for oaths; I am literal in every thing else, but they, thank God! defy translation. Of these disgraces of the language, and the peculiar scandal of this part of France, he was most prodigal, and would have reminded every reader of *Gresset's Vert-vert*, of the foul-mouthed parrot when

Les —, les —, voltigeant sur son bec,
Les jeunes sœurs crurent qu'il parlait Grec.

The inspector rapidly disencumbered himself of all extraneous matter, flung aside his great coat, hat, boots, pistols, belt and sabre; and almost threw himself into the embraces of the flames, which the crackling pine wood sent out in broad folds across the chimney. I was so much amused with the scene, that I suspended all my projected operations, and fixed my attention on this new object.

He was at first gruff and surly, receiving without any acknowledgment, but an occasional curse, the officious attentions of the landlady and Cazille, and the humble addresses of the men around him. He flung himself into the arm-chair which was placed for him, and, his back being towards me, he quite overlooked me sitting in my nook. As the warmth of the blaze dried up his exterior it seemed to melt his heart, for he threw a "thankye" at the hostess as she adjusted the second worsted stocking round his knee; and he chuckled Cazille under the chin, and kissed her forehead, while she stooped to place the slippers on his feet.

The rest of the party came in for their share of kindness in the way that follows. "And who have we here, eh? A gang of blackguard smugglers, * * *! Oh! I beg pardon, gentlemen—fishermen! Egad, one might have known your trade by your smell, * * *! Stand back, friends, I hate perfumery. Well! what have you got in your baskets to-night? Turbot and brandy sauce, * * *! I'll warrant it the bottoms are as well lined with bottles of Cognac, as the tops with stinking mackerel, * * *! But take care, I'll give a hint to the Octroi,* be sure of it; and if you are once caught at the barrier, you shall lie in the Fort† till you are as withered and rotten as a piece of salted cod, * * *!"

* The toll-house.

† The prison of Bordeaux is an old castle called the Fort du Ha, but familiarly "The Fort."

A burst of laughter from the speaker pronounced this to be wit; and an answering peal from his circle told that they knew the time to acknowledge his joke. Several smart and pleasant sayings were retorted on the inspector; but the most substantial repartee, that is the best of the *good things*, appeared in the shape of a noble turbot, which one of the fishermen produced from his stock. This spokesman "hoped, in the name of himself and comrades, that Monsieur the inspector would do them the honor of accepting the fish, and give himself the trouble of smelling it, to be sure that it was fresh."

"* * * *! one can't refuse," was the reply; and he pulled out his purse, as with a would-be effort, to pay for the compliment.

"Oh! oh! oh!" cried the fishermen in concert, "what is Monsieur the inspector going to do? Pay for it! Always like himself, generous and noble! No, no, no! It's the least we can do for monsieur; and we shall be too well rewarded, if he will do us the honor of giving himself the trouble to write a little word to the gentlemen of the Octroi at Bordeaux, to let us pass the barrier without search, that we may get to the market early, and pull up for the time we have lost in the storm."

"Ob, willingly!" cried Monsieur the inspector. "God forbid I should refuse so slight a kindness to such honest fellows as I know you all to be. Give me a pen, Cazille! But hark'ye, my friends! you are sure there is no brandy?"

"My word of honor!" burst from every mouth.

"Hold!" cried the inspector, tender of their consciences, "Hold, don't finish the sentence, my good fellows! I know you are honest, healthy-longed lads, and you'll want all your breath to puff off your fish to the fat merchants of the Chartrons* to-morrow. There! (*giving the paper.*) But, hark'ye, stuff the sea-weed well to the bottom; I thought I heard the shaking of glass in that basket."

"Nothing, nothing, monsieur, on my word of honor!" protested one of the party, "but two or three bottles of salt water, a cure for Madame Dupuis at the Red Cross. Monsieur knows, perhaps, that Madame Dupuis' legs are——"

"Yes, yes,—very well,—I know it all. Be off! be off! the moon is up, and I want my supper. Cazille, prepare that turbot for your mistress's master-hand. You'll find a fresh bottle of capers in my saddle-bags."

"Adieu," "Good night," "Safe journey," etcetera, etcetera, were bandied backwards and forwards; and as the fishermen reloaded their little carts with the baskets, which they had placed in the house to shelter them from the rain, I thought the care with which they lifted them up denoted a cargo more brittle than flat fish, and more valuable than a couple of bottles of salt water.

I came at length under the eye of the inspector, who seemed for an instant disconcerted, but as soon recovered his swaggering mein. He examined me as keenly as if he had been going to strip the bark or lop the branches off a fir-tree. He next turned his looks towards the landlady and Cazille, and I saw that a stifled inquiry was lurking under his eyelid, and trembling on his tongue.

Fond of being first in the field, I addressed him, and proposed in

* The rich and commercial quarter of Bordeaux, lying near the river.

on civil terms that he would partake of my supper. A curl of contempt stole over his lip, as he exclaimed, "Supper, * * * ! And has *madame* then nothing better to give her guests than Spartan broth and water of the Tiber?"

"The landlady was preparing her defence, but he cut her short with "No excuse—not a word—'tis infamous! Cazille, place another cover at my table, * * * ! must travellers be served in this way? You have read the Greek and Roman histories, sir?"

I bowed assent.

"Well, sir, if you cannot sup with Apicius, you shall not fare like *Lycurgus*, depend on't. You are English sir?"

I replied that I *was* a subject of his British Majesty.

"So much the better," replied he; "I love the English. Many a fat capon our king owes to yours. This is the time to stick to one's friends, * * * ! and the king of England's subject shall sup to-night with the king of France's inspector of forests. Come along! Make haste, *madame*! Cazille, light us in!"

I promptly accepted the uncouth bidding. I thought the inspector was a precious morsel for such an appetite as mine; and as I followed him down a narrow passage leading to an inner chamber, our ears were assailed with a storm of snoring, which it seemed utterly impossible to sleep through.

"* * * ! what do I hear?" cried the inspector. "Is the thunder at work again, or is it your lazy slug-a-bed of a husband that thus outrages all decency? What ho! *Batiste*! awake, you brute!"

This obliging reveille was speedily replied to by a hoarse and feeble voice, and by a bound upon the planks of a room above stairs, as if the sleeper had shot out of bed in sudden terror—as well he might.

A red night-cap quickly protruded itself from a door at the top of the stairs, and a red nose, projecting far from a thin, but rubricated visage, snuffed out a welcome, as imperfect as the acclamations of a troubled dream. At length we comprehended some such words as these. "Aha! *Monsieur* the inspector! Aha! I have been watching for you. I knew the steady-going trot of your horse; old *Trois-pied's* hoof could not escape me. Ay, ay, I heard you humming your favorite air (singing.)

L'on revient toujours
A ses premiers amours.

Aha! I knew we might look for you this fine moonlight night."

"Away, thou shadow of an impudent lie!" vociferated the inspector. "The trot of my horse, forsooth! I galloped at least three leagues through the forest, and came up at full speed to the house. Humming my favorite air, * * * ! the wind was near forcing open my fast closed mouth, and choking me with my own teeth! This moon-light night! The moon is shining now, 'tis true; but the moon is not falser than your flattery, nor the clouds it broke through thicker than your skull. Why, *madame*, why do you let the dog lie thus through storm and fair weather, soaking in his bed?"

"Alas! *Monsieur* the inspector, what else can I do with him? 'Tis the only place where he's good for anything."

"And not for much there even, I'll warrant it, * * * !" cried the inspector.

The jest-proclaiming laugh burst out at this sally, and he paused for a moment for the echo. The fishermen were unluckily gone; I did not take the cue; the hostess thought the subject too serious for merriment; Cazille could only give a significant but silent smile;—so poor Batiste, who knew the inspector's humor, was obliged himself to reverberate the laugh. Having forced out a drowsy yitter, he disappeared; and before we were seated in the inspector's room I heard him snoring away, as merrily as if he had not been aware of the interruption.

The chamber into which we were ushered was one of more comfort than was promised by the other parts of the house. It was low but spacious, boarded, and cleanly papered. Two beds, with white cotton hangings, filled a recess; the furniture was neat, and a joyous blaze sprang up from the pine-wood faggots, which took fire like tinder.

A table had been placed for supper, by the quiet assiduity of Cazille; and the difference which it presented to the one intended for me was striking. Everything was of a finer and better order: the bread was white, the water filtered, and the arrangement had altogether an air of costliness in comparison with that which I had left. We seated ourselves by the fire, which even at that hot season was not unpleasant; for the house lay low and damp, and the late torrents had nearly set it afloat. We soon got into conversation on public topics, which, however, were speedily suspended for one of more immediate interest—the private history of my companion; with every particular which he chose to reveal, of his birth, parentage, education, and adventures.

With not one of these details do I mean to gratify my inquisitive (or 'twere perhaps better said my curious) readers. It is enough to know that the narrator had been for many years a serjeant of hussars, and was now an inspector of forests. He had served, he told me, in many campaigns, from the sands of Egypt to the snows of Russia; had been known to and noticed by all the marshals, and most of the generals; had performed on many occasions prodigies of valor; and, to crown the business, had received thirteen wounds, which all the surgeons had successively pronounced mortal, but none of which had proved so as yet.

Now my little knowledge of life has taught me, as a positive lesson, rarely to believe more than half what I hear; and whenever I chance to light on a member of the Munchausen family, my credulity diminishes again one half. In this case I should not perhaps have believed so much as the *fourth* of what was told me, had I not counted one scar on the inspector's forehead, one across his face, and saw that he was minus a finger from the left hand. That made fairly three wounds, which was the fourth of thirteen, all but a fraction, and that I made up by giving him credit for a spent ball, or some such slighter hurt in parts to me invisible.

I had thus satisfied myself that the inspector had fairly made out his title to that proportion of belief, which gave him the right of be-

ing regarded as a credible witness; and while I was occupied with the calculation, the supper was gradually appearing, under the auspices of the hostess and Cazille; the former more than fulfilling the promise of her first bill of fare.

I am here held in doubt between the desire of recording our excellent cheer, and the knowledge of the effect produced by leaving important incidents involved in mystery.—Well! I have decided the point to my own satisfaction, and I hope to that of my readers. I will describe the supper, for I think the sin of amplification more venial than that of neglect.

First, then, came a soup of really good materials, known to the lovers of French cookery by the title *a la Julienne*, and only approached in Great Britain by Scotch broth, and that distantly indeed. A piece of *bouilli* flowing in tomato sauce, and a large melon with salt and pepper succeeded. A plate of Bordeaux oysters followed, and I am borne out by a work,* well known to fame, in pronouncing them unrivalled. Next came mutton cutlets, dressed *a la maitre d'hôtel*. Then the turbot, flooded with melted butter, and thickly strewn with capers. Next a brace of partridges stewed in cabbage, a favorite dish in these parts, and in high odor with the inspector. After that a capon richly stuffed with trifles; then another plate of oysters; then four ortolans, so fat, that they seemed to melt before the inspector's longing gaze. Next a large dish of custard, with a tart of raspberry, or currants, I forget which; and finally a dessert of grapes, green figs, peaches, and Roquefort cheese; with a plate of *royans*, a little fish, not inferior nor less esteemed than *sardignas*. To moisten well this feast, were bottles of various kinds of wine of the country. During supper, Barsac and Sauterne; specimens of all the best growths of Medoc, from Lafitte to Léoville, with the dessert; and after it a bumper of that luscious liqueur the sweet white wine of Bergerac.

When enough had been disposed of, of solid and liquid enjoyment, a cup of strong coffee, followed by a glass of Anisette, from the authentic and unadulterated still of Messrs. Roger, of Bordeaux, concluded our repast—on the merits of which it would not be becoming in me to pronounce any judgment.

Our conversation during the period thus occupied was short and pithy. The words were few, but well chosen, and seldom stretched to a sentence of greater length than "Excellent!" "Very good!" "Not bad!" "Another slice?" "Help yourself." "Devilish hot!" and some others of the same tenor.

Two things surprised me in this supper. The excellence of the provisions, and the merit of the cookery. But to relieve my readers' astonishment in much less time than my own was removed, I shall tell now that my hospitable entertainer had for his greatest failing, if it was one, a love of good living, which his situation allowed him amply to indulge; that he was in the constant habit of sending a stock of delicacies to this miserable inn, a day or two before his visits of inspection; and that the landlady had been established in

* Lord Blaney's Forced Tour.

the house, by his particular patronage, because of her talents in the arts of the kitchen, and for other reasons, which, being of a private nature, I am sure not one reader in a thousand would give a pin to know.

I had been hungry, and ate heartily; but before the prowess of the inspector my efforts were feeble indeed. Not one dish escaped his investigation; he drank in proportion; and at many intervals I saw him slip his hand under the napkin, which he had at the commencement carefully tucked under his chin. A short and convulsive snap followed each of these movements, which puzzled me much, until, on his throwing away his napkin, with the last change of plates, I perceived his waistcoat unbuttoned and buttonless, from bottom to top; and I easily divined that he had made successive but too dilatory efforts to relieve himself, by what is in the technical phrase of epicurean philoso—no, philology, called *letting out a reef*.

Being at length fairly freed from the labors of the table, and settled quietly to a bottle of exquisite claret, I turned my attention to what was after all my main object in this convivial *tete a tete*. I had not, for one moment, forgotten the mysterious and interesting stranger, who had so forcibly fixed my attention, and excited my curiosity. I had from prudence suspended my efforts to obtain information from the hostess or the fishermen, but was resolved to renew them, when the abrupt entrance of the inspector had stopped the development of my plans. After a little while, I thought that he himself might become the means of affording me the information for which I panted. Thus in our conversation before supper, I had endeavored, from time to time, to lead him on to the subject of local concerns, but to every attempt of that kind I had an evasive answer. If I spoke of the country we were in, he said he knew little of home, and that soldiers were more familiar with the field of battle than their native plains. If I mentioned any striking domestic event, he always quoted some cotemporary action,—Marengo, the Pyramids, Jena, Austerlitz, and so forth; and when I spoke of dates, it was always "yes, yes, I was then making the campaign of Germany—Portugal—Moscow—or some other."

His loquacity and boasting always baffled me, and when Cazelle had finally closed the door leaving us to our claret, he burst out in a new but not less fluent ebullition.

"Well, sir, have you been able to sup?" I paid all due acknowledgment to the good fare.

"Well, well, I do believe that after all the disasters we have suffered, and with all our faults, the world will not deny us the glory of knowing what's good, * * * *! Ros-bif, bif-teck, blou-poiding, and Woich-rabet,* are all very well in their way, * * * *! but when you put them beside a *petit pate a la berhamel*, a dish of *carpe a la maitre-lote a tete de veau en tortue*—et cetera, et cetera, * * * *! What a figure they cut! I'll tell you what, sir, your nation knows nothing of cookery. An Englishman in Paris is no better than a Scythian

* Such is the orthography used by Mons. Beauvilliers, who would rather duce roast beef, beef steak, plum pudding, and Welsh rabbit to his country men.

at Athens, ****! Sir, you eat your meat raw, and call that cookery! So does an American Indian, or an African negro. You despise the arts of the kitchen, ****! But you forget that Gallienus, though an emperor, was chiefly famed for his culinary knowledge; and that Cadmus, the great-great-grandfather of Bacchus, the founder of Thebes, began his career by being cook to the king of Sidon! Do you know, sir, that to fulfil such an honorable station, 'tis not enough to have the finest constitution, the purest health, and your senses in the utmost perfection; but the brightest talents must be joined to knowledge the most profound? I don't speak, ****! of the dirty work of your kitchen, I only show myself there to direct the action of the fire, and to see the effect of my operations, ****! Seated in an adjoining room, I give my orders, ****! which my subaltern workmen execute. I muse on the productions of nature, leaving them sometimes in their exquisite simplicity; again arranging and disguising them according to new proportions, and fitting them to flatter the palate. Do you wish, for example, a sucking pig, or a large piece of beef? I simply boil the one and roast the other! Must you have a well-dressed hare? If it is young, ****! it wants nothing but its merit to make it appear with distinction and honor. I put it on the spit, and serve it up smoking hot! But it is in the depth of combination, ****! that my science is most sublime. Salt, pepper, oil, and vinegar——"

"Hold, hold in mercy, my good sir," cried I, astonishment, I am certain, stamped on my countenance, for it filled my brain. "This burst of eloquence and erudition is too much for me. You could not have been more at home had you been yourself a cook."

"****! What do you say, ****! A cook, ****! I am a Frenchman, an officer, a man of honor, one of the inspectors of the royal forests, highways, and bridges, ****! What do you mean?"

At this tremendous explosion of indignant and irritated honor, my companion bounced up and thumped the table with his clenched fist, loud enough to alarm and bring in the landlady and Cazelle, and sufficient to have awakened any one of the seven sleepers whose name was not Batiste. The glasses rung, and the decanters danced on the board. The hand that produced such powerful effects was next instinctively clapped upon the thigh, where fortunately the sabre was not; so the inspector had no remedy but to seize his glass, and wash down the imagined insult, which he had not the immediate means of wiping away in a more becoming manner.

The appearance of the hostess and her handmaid brought him to himself, and calmed in a moment the transports of offended feeling. Having paid this involuntary tribute of devotion to the influence of female charms, he ordered them to retire in a tone more fitting a high-priest than a votary. They obeyed the mandate, and I, finding the moment favorable, quietly told him many civil things in explanation of what I had said. He received the atonement, and the matter dropped; and I, thinking the opportunity favorable, turned the conversation abruptly to the object of my chief solicitude.

"And pray, Monsieur the inspector," said I, "Is this large tract

of desert solely inhabited by miserable shepherds and goat-herds?"

The inspector shook himself a moment, as if this sudden transition from sharp to flat had grated on his well-organized mind.

Recovering himself, he replied, "Eh! why! yes, ****! and much worse than shepherds and goat-herds, believe me. Why do I travel armed through these tracks, eh? Do you think I carry pistols and sabre for show? ****!"

"You fear robbers, then?" asked I.

"Fear! ****!" vociferated the inspector, "what's fear? ****! I've often heard talk of fear, but never knew it yet."

I explained away once more, and he was once more appeased.

"Yes," replied he, to a less offensive way in putting my former question; yes, there are robbers here sometimes, but I never meet them. These fellows know their men, ****! But there are worse than robbers—refugees, revolutionists, republicans, ****! who plunge into these forests and escape the law. Had I my way with the scoundrels, I'd set fire to the pine woods, ****! and consume the rascals with pitch, tar, and resin—provided the king gave me another forest, ****!"

Here came in the laugh of acknowledged drollery, with which I was now familiar, and even inclined to join in to keep the inspector in good humor. I resumed the conversation.

"Have persons of any rank or importance found shelter here for political opinions?"

"Ay, that they have—and find it at this moment too. There is now, this very night, one man lurking in these deserts, whose head would pay for the trouble of arresting him, ****!"

"A tall man," said I hastily, without a moment's thought, "in a Spanish cloak and fur cap?"

"He is a tall man certainly, but as for the cloak and cap, they have little to do with his description. If you meet him in that dress to day, you might see him wrapped in a sheep-skin to-morrow, ****!"

"A handsome, dark, noble looking man, about fifty?" was my next inquiry.

"Ay, all that," replied my companion. "He's handsome enough outside—but as gloomy as his complexion within. As for his nobility, it is all in his looks, ****! for he is no more noble than I am."

"I have met such a man," said I, recovering my caution. "What is the crime which forces him into these wilds?"

"I'll tell you that," said he! and I was prepared to listen with my whole attention, when we were both attracted towards the kitchen, by the noise of persons dismounting from their horses, and entering the house.

CHAPTER III.

"Who the devil can this be at this hour of night?" cried the inspector. "Hold, let's listen a moment."

I had my hand on the latch of the door, but he seized it as he spoke. In spite of myself, I did for this once, what must be, in any circumstance, considered an unworthy thing; and the instrument which compelled me, that was the inspector, did not rise in my estimation.

"Ah! madame, is it you?" cried the landlady.

"He is here! my dear father is here!" exclaimed, in a tone half questioning half certain, one of the sweetest voices I had ever heard.

"Hush!" said the landlady; and a low whisper followed. I was more delighted at it than if I had heard a long and valuable secret. I fancied I saw in an instant through the whole affair. The lovely inquirer, felt I (for something told me that tones so sweet must have proceeded from a beautiful instrument, and whatever it was which said so told no lie,) the lovely inquirer prompted by duty and affection, has wandered here through this drear desert, to meet her proscribed and virtuous father—for such a being could not reverence or hold communion with guilt. My presence drove the sufferer from his shelter; and this coarse inspector is one of those prowling wretches, which we are told all governments must employ, lying in wait to pounce upon his victim.

"Not now, at least," said I, throwing aside his iron hand, which grasped my arm, flinging open the door, and running into the kitchen. A scream burst from the lady, who was young, and indeed most beautiful. The hostess and Cazille gazed on me with astonishment, mixed with alarm; and the inspector himself, who followed close upon me, did not know what to think of my abruptness;—and for a moment, as he told me afterwards, returned upon me the compliment which my suspicions had affixed to him.

I advanced towards the lady, and was going to address her, God knows how! when a young man, of distinguished deportment, rushed in, attracted from the stables, by the scream of his lovely wife; and with fire in his eyes, which were fixed upon me and the inspector, and trembling tenderness in his accents, he called out, "What's this, dearest Stephanie? what has happened?"

"Nothing, nothing," replied she, "but this gentleman——"

"What has he dared to do?" cried he advancing fiercely towards me. I made some confused apology for my awkward intrusion, which I saw was received in rather a shy and suspicious way. I never made an explanation less to my own satisfaction, and was not surprised that it was so little to theirs. I got no reply, and retired a few paces, while the inspector advancing, addressed the stranger

with humble familiarity, by a name which it is not necessary to mention here.

The young man received his address with infinite haughtiness, and a reproachful look, which seemed to me to say, "you have betrayed us." The other made a nearer approach, and in a lower tone appeared to defend himself from the reproach of a connexion with me. I was little flattered by all this, and full as anxious as the inspector appeared, to cut the slender thread which bound our acquaintance.

Advancing, therefore, to the door, I looked out upon the desert, and thought that it would be for the common comfort of the whole party, if I trusted myself to the moonlight, and pursued the road to La Teste, which lay before the house. I strolled out, and by chance directed my steps towards the stable, a building larger than the house itself, and entering the open door, I saw by the light of a resin match, which burned in a distant corner, a man, in the act of arranging the clumsy cordage of a pair of oxen.

He came towards the door, and led them after him by the magic of some words in *Patois*, proved, by his tone and their compliance, to be soothing and affectionate. I wished the man "good night," and he repeated my salutation in French, which was at least understandable. He was a comely young fellow, and of a civil demeanor. I asked him where he was going? He replied, "to La Teste." I proposed myself as his companion, and he readily consented. He proceeded forthwith to adjust his oxen, and yoke them to his little cart, which was loaded with packages, and covered with a canvass awning. I was inquisitive—he communicative: thus, while he got ready, I discovered that he was a carrier from the little town just mentioned, the only son of a poor widow woman, and now on his return from Bordeaux with a cargo of groceries and other matters for the La Testians. He finally informed me that he was in the constant habit of stopping at this half-way house, for the purpose of reposing his oxen, and of refreshing himself—with draughts of wine or beer from the hostess's cellar, and draughts of love and hope from the reservoirs of Cazilles's melting black eyes.

The preparations for departure were simple and soon completed. As I re-entered the inn to arrange my baggage, I heard the inspector assuring the lovely traveller, that he thought any sacrifice slight for the daughter of so worthy a father, or the wife of so generous a benefactor. This speech was accompanied by many obsequious bows, as he lighted the lady and her husband to the chamber where we had supped, and which I took it for granted he had resigned to them.

They passed down the corridor accompanied by the hostess, who was loaded with a warming-pan, sheets, and pillows. As my eyes were fixed on the elegant figure of the lady, I saw her start and stop, while her head was turned in the direction of the flight of stairs formerly noticed. I was too far removed to hear the cause of her alarm; but a murmur of explanation, and a closing curse from the inspector, made it plain to me that the interruption was caused by the nasal salutation of poor Batiste, with a comment in the inspector's peculiar style.

I looked round the kitchen in search of Cazille, but she was not to be found; so, arranging the contents of my knapsack, which the fire

had completely dried, taking my gun under my arm, and rousing Ranger from the corner where he reposed, I waited the return of the landlady, and announced my intended departure with the carrier.

"Faith, you are right, my good sir," said the hostess; "better repose in a carrier's cart than lie in a hayloft, or sleep on a kitchen chair. I could have offered you no better accommodation. You see, monsieur the inspector has given up his room, and we have only one bed more, which he must occupy."

I assured her that I was much better pleased to go on my journey, than interrupt the arrangements of so obliging a lady as she had proved herself to be; and I begged her to let me know how much I was indebted for the entertainment I had received.

"Indebted, sir? Nothing to be sure. Didn't you sup with monsieur the inspector?"

"Very true; but I have given a good deal of trouble, and then there's the lodging and feeding the shepherds who guided me here, and to whom, no doubt, you have given beds and supper."

"Bless you, sir! The poor fellows are long ere this at home.—They paid me for the glass of brandy they had on entering, and left the house before you had changed your wet shoes."

I protest I felt a blush, of a mixed and almost undefinable origin, overspread my face. Compunction for my own neglect of these honest creatures, shame at my unrewarded obligation to them, and pleasure at their disinterested conduct, were pretty nearly, I believe, the materials which composed the coloring of my cheek. I had nothing for it but to place a trifle in the hands of the landlady on their account; and she carried an air of honesty about her, so much in unison with what I have most commonly met regarding points of confidence and honor in people of *her class* in France, that I was certain my remittance would reach its destination.

"And now, madame, for your own trouble—"

"My dear sir, I am more than paid by this proof of trust,—but if your generosity prompts you to remember the girl—"

"I shall not forget her, believe me, nor her mistress neither: but where is she? I am anxious to set off, as I keep the carrier waiting."

"Rest tranquil, he is in no hurry," replied the hostess, with a good humored smile. "He also has a little account to settle for his evening's entertainment, and Cazille and he are, no doubt, making up the reckoning."

Being already in the secret, this intimation did not surprise me.—As I was never disposed to interrupt the tottings up of love's ledger, I quietly sat myself down on a chair beside the landlady, leaving Cazille and her lover to balance their account in their own way; and I have no doubt but that hope and happiness were placed at the *profit* side, while not even time was allowed to burthen the columns of *loss*.

"Your pretty house-maid has chosen well, madame,"

"Why yes, one must tell the truth. There is not in the department a better lad than Geoffroi the carrier. I believe he never did harm to man or beast but once, when he threw a bale of sugar on my poor man, who, in his haste to join Cazille, he overlooked taking his evening's nap by the stable door."

I had no time to ascertain whether this injury to Batiste was cited as an exception to Geoffroi's good treatment to *man or beast*. The reader will therefore take it as he pleases.

"But what retards the union of this young couple?" asked I.

"Faith, sir, but a trifle, after all. You must know, sir, that Geoffroi has the whole support of his aged mother on his hands, and poor fellow, he is tightly put to it these hard times. He is just able to make both ends meet; but, barring his cart and oxen, he has not a louis or a louis' worth. Cazille is one of the best lasses in the world, but she has but forty-eight francs, a year wages, and since the courtship began, about six months ago, has been able to save only the half of that towards defraying the cost of the wedding."

"Why, how much would those expenses amount to?"

"Oh! sir, what with fees, and flowers, and favors; and a white dress for the bride, and a treat for the friends, and paying the priest, it would take a good hundred francs besides what she has by her."

"But has she no friend who would advance her the money?"

"She has friends enough, but all people as poor as herself."

"Would not you, my amiable hostess, yourself give such a trifle for the happiness of so good a servant?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, I might, perhaps, if I chose to strain a point, afford a hundred francs, and it might be worse disposed of. But, my dear sir, if I were to give the money, and the girl got married, what would become of me? Where should I look for so faithful, so industrious, and so good tempered a lass in her place?"

There was so much *naïvete* and frankness in this avowal that it overpowered the displeasure rising up at the woman's selfishness. Instead of answering her, I asked myself a question.

"Is it not hard," thought I, "that I am almost always thus thwarted when I wish to give people my *entire* esteem? That in the very moments when my heart is flattering itself with having found something *wholly* deserving its regard, an unlooked for flaw, or crack, or stain, presents itself to my eye, and checks the current of my good will? But let it be so. I see it is our nature; and henceforward I will only look at the smooth portions of character, and step over the inequalities by which every individual disposition is defaced."

Then, turning to the landlady and our subject. "But the inspector? Would not he be disposed to forward the good work?"

"Lord bless you, sir! not he. Not that I would speak ill of monsieur the inspector, for, in truth, I have no right. He has made my children, and my husband, and myself, what we are; and we owe every thing to him. But he has enough to do now with every sous, in buying dainties, without which he could not live."

There was much in this last speech that admitted of various constructions, according to different fancies. But it was no business of mine to examine closely as to what the inspector had made of my hostess or her spouse. I turned then boldly and abruptly to another topic.

"Surely," said I, "the gentleman whom I surprised here on my arrival, and his daughter, who is now in the house, have ability and inclination to step forward in a case like this."

"Ay, that they have, good souls! and it is from them that Cazille's happiness will come at last."

"Is the name of that gentleman a secret?"

"It is no secret here, sir, and, unfortunately for himself, is too well known every where."

"Is it not strange, that a man so good, as I think he is, should find it a misfortune to be known, or feel concealment necessary?"

"Alas! sir," replied my landlady with a pensive tone, "how little does our happiness depend on our being known! The world always hears what is bad. A hundred virtues speak less loudly than one crime."

"But can such a man have committed a crime?"

"Which of us, my good sir, has not some failing, which society calls a fault, or has not done some deed which it looks upon as a crime?"

This tallied so well with my late reflections, that it threw me back a little upon myself, and I paused for a reply. I saw that I was gaining fast on the landlady's confidence, and, expecting to be in a few minutes in possession of the grand secret, I forgot how precious time was in such conjunctures. I sought for an answer to the last observation, which might advance the progress of disclosure; but before I found one fitting, the hostess cried to me hastily, "For God's sake, go, sir! I hear monsieur the inspector preparing to leave the inner room. He must not see you with me alone. Adieu! sir. Here, Cazille! Cazille! give a kiss to Geoffroi, and come and warm the beds!"

This last part of her speech was uttered outside the door, where she had moved, leading me gently by the arm; and the commands thus given to Cazille were answered from the bench in front of the house, by a smack which echoed loudly, and sounded to me as chaste as any kiss which ever sent up its music to the moon.

Cazille came towards us, her head reclining a little, and her eyes cast down. Geoffroi sprang lightly on the seat of his cart, crying, "Come along, sir! Good night, madame! Adieu! dear Cazille! Adieu! adieu!"

I shook hands with the hostess. I did as much, but no more, by Cazille, and lightened myself of a little load of obligation for her services; but neither got rid of, nor wished to be rid of, my gratitude, for the smiling attentions with which they had been performed.

As I flung Ranger into the cart and stepped up myself, a word which had, I am positive, nothing cabalistic in it, for it was fairly and honestly pronounced, but which was to me incomprehensible, set the oxen in motion. The whispered inspiration of an Icelandic driver to his rein-deer could not have had a more animating effect. The oxen set off in a full and steady pace, slowly pulling away their master from the spot where all his affections were centred, and me from a place which had, during the last four hours, awakened much of my interest on more accounts than one.

It was just midnight when we started. Every thing was hushed and still. Neither the wheels of our little carriage nor the steps of our team were heard upon the sands. Geoffroi looked back a moment at the house, heaved a sigh, and sank into silence. It was then

my turn to throw a parting glance at the scene of my late adventures, and I did so, more, I must acknowledge, from the common-place wish of fixing its appearance on my memory, than from any thing approaching the tender sentiments which my companion connected with it.

The landlady and Cazille had re-entered, as the reader will have inferred from Geoffroi's sigh, which had all the tone of parting love. The little building, its outhouses, hayrick and garden, seemed all to sleep quietly in the shade of the tall pines; while the moon shone far and wide across the desert, and silvered the tops of the woods. Having made myself acquainted with the exterior appearance of the inn and its immediate vicinity, I turned round, and, affected by the taciturnity of my companion, I uttered not a word.

Nothing could be more beautifully calm than was the night. At one hand, as far as I could see, before me, was a forest, and at the other an open waste, thick set with stunted fir-trees, which gave it an appearance of low brush-wood, and hid the sandy soil. Occasional clusters of sheep showed here and there a patch of dusky white, and the dull tinkling of a bell told that the flock was awake and browsing, while all around them was in deep repose. A wide cut drain marked at each side the boundary of the road, which was in this part quite straight, and very hard. It was generally smooth and safe, but the violent jolting in some parts made me examine it more closely, and I found that the causeway was formed of large pine trees, thrown across and covered with layers of sand, and occasionally stone. It was, however, in very few places out of repair; and in half an hour we had entirely passed those uncomfortable spots. Affected not more by my previous fatigue than by the present monotony and the easy motion of the cart, I felt myself softly dropping asleep. I gave way to the gentle inclination, and reclining under the awning, and supported by the packages, I soon forgot the world, its tumults, joys and sorrows.

As I was dozing away, I heard Geoffroi exclaim, "Ah! he sleeps. He has left no cares, no agitation, no mistress behind him! I'll warrant it he is a happy fellow."

I felt a deep sigh rising from my breast, but I was resolved it should not have utterance; while Geoffroi, influenced, perhaps, by somewhat of the same feeling, sprang lightly on the sand, and addressing a cheering word or two to his beasts trudged on beside them.

I slept soundly for, I should suppose, a couple of hours; and was awakened by the rustling of branches against the awning which covered the cart. I started up and looked out upon the narrow road which we travelled. At either side of us were trees thickly planted, the passage being scarcely sufficient to allow the breadth of our vehicle. The overhanging boughs struck from time to time against the awning, and no other sounds were to be heard, but the soft movements of the wheels rolling over the natural carpet, which thick-strewn leaves, acorns and fir-cones formed upon the sand. We were in the depths of a thick wood, not composed of pine trees alone, but containing all the varieties of the forest. Instead of the tall and straight monotony of the unvarying fir; beech, ash, and oak-leaves

glittered in the moon-beams, and flung their canopy across our path.

As we proceeded the passage became darker, whether from the greater thickness of the wood, or the temporary concealment of the moon, I could not judge; but the effect of the scene, which soon broke upon me, was considerably heightened by this increased obscurity. While nothing around me was to be distinguished, at even arm's length from me, and the oxen and their driver were quite lost to my sight, a sudden turn to the left brought us suddenly to a spacious opening and presented a view which enchantment seemed to have conjured up.

The whole expanse of heaven, lighted by the full moon and studded with stars, shone brilliantly above; and all its splendor was reflected in the unruffled breast of a lake spreading wide before me.—The road, which ran straight along the bank of this liquid mirror, sloped smoothly to its side, and the feet of the oxen were, at times, washed by its waters. The forest by which it was skirted threw down its dark reflection, and sighing breeze sometimes scattered loose leaves upon the surface, stirring it with fairy undulations.

I thought for an instant that I still slept, and that imagination had raised for me a mirage of unexampled loveliness. But as I grew convinced of the reality of the scene, I marvelled how such a lovely sheet of water could exist in this sandy waste; and was sometime moving along its side before I discovered that it was but a river which narrowed as we advanced, and whose opposite bank I did not at first perceive from the lowness of the road we travelled. The stream flowed on, in scarcely perceptible motion nor was its beauty lessened by its decreased width; for the opposite bank, being formed of a ledge of the purest and smoothest sand, shone in the moonlight like a frame of polished silver rising above the water. The dark edging of the forest formed a fine contrast and was at times thrown into a deeper shade by passing clouds, which could not, however, prevent the moon from illumining the whole scene, and giving the more distant parts of it the full brightness of her rays.

Geoffroi was still walking at the slow pace which suited the inclination of his oxen, and seemed in harmony also with his own frame of mind. A low murmured melody kept time with his sauntering progress; and I know not whether it was the peculiar softness of the scene or the sweetness of his mellow voice, but I think I never heard an air more tender, or warbled with a simpler grace. It was a tune quite in the style of those wild and heart-moving airs which make the traveller in Ireland so often stop and listen: then prompt him to look round at the desolate grandeur of the scenery and the rustle of songster, and wonder how strains so exquisite had birth in so rude a land, or found expression from so rough a tongue.

The words of Geoffroi's song were Gascon. I have already avowed my ignorance of the particular dialect of that language used in those parts, but still I caught here and there an occasional word, the meaning of which I knew.

Thus *cla de lune* means moonlight; *pin*, pine-tree; *beoitat*, beauty; *foret*, forest; and *la vie*, life. And at the end of every cadence the name of names, Cazille, filled up the close.

I made meanings for the blanks, to please my own fancy, and stringing together some lines which suited the music, I found that I had almost inadvertently composed a series of extempore stanzas, which a less candid story-teller might have called a faithful and literal translation.

SONG OF THE LANDES.

I.

The moonlight, through the branching pines,
 Floats o'er the sands with silver streak ;
 How like the chasteo'd beam, that shines
 Through dark-fringed lids on beauty's cheek,
 When timid glances trembling steal
 From thy bright eyes, mine own Cazille !

II.

As o'er the desert-stream's smooth breast
 The night-winds from the forest shed
 Light leaves to break the water's rest,
 It vibrates in its deepest bed.
 So doth my thrilling bosom feel
 Thy soft-breathed words, mine own Cazille !

III.

I see thee not, but thou art here !
 Even as heaven's lamp, obscur'd awhile,
 Still lights the desert far and near,
 Through sorrow's cloud the mellow smile
 Makes life's dull waste bright spots reveal,
 And lights me on, mine own Cazille !

There were half a dozen stanzas more, pretty much in the same sing-song-style ; but I forgot half of them, and will not inflict the rest upon my readers.

CHAPTER IV.

I went on, contemplating and rhyming, while Geoffroi continued his strain, the mechanical cadence of which convinced me he was musing too, till I was roused by the dull and hollow sound of a horn blown, as it seemed to me, on the opposite bank of the river and echoing or answered in the wood beside me. The insinuations of the inspector rushed upon my mind, and I thought there were few more convenient places for rifling a poor traveller's knapsack, and levying contributions on his purse. But the reader will remark my forbearance in saying nothing of the determined air with which I cocked my gun, nor the desperate resolution I formed, not to be robbed by less than six highwaymen at any rate.

I called out to Geoffroi (in whatever tone my readers may severally fancy) to know what was meant by these sounds.

"Ah! sir, are you awake? Well, you have made a good sleep of it. Egad, I believe you had a lesson from the worthy slug-a-bed Batiste; but you are far from coming up to your master yet."

I confess I did not like this evasion, and I repeated my question somewhat sharply.

"Why, lord! sir, are you afraid of robbers? Having got so far, you may make yourself easy on that head; for certainly the most convenient time to have cut yours or any other gentleman's throat was while you were asleep in a dark wood we left behind us an hour back."

Here he laughed—with good humor or malice, just as it may be, thought I—and though generally relishing a jest in my heart, I was seriously indisposed for this gaiety at present.

I do conscientiously believe that something about cocking the gun flashed on my brain; but if such valorous thoughts were preparing to rise, they were quickly put to rest by Geoffroi's answer to my exclamation, that

"I *would* be satisfied, * * * !"

Yes, reader! shower down your reproaches like rain! I do plead guilty to the whole line of asterisks; but *magna veritas est*, &c.

I was just going to jump down on the road, when Geoffroi seized me by the leg, and in a supplicating tone entreated that "monsieur would not give himself the trouble to *make himself angry* (I like that idiom;) that the sounds I heard proceeded only from the postboy rousing the watchman at the little bridge; which monsieur saw so close upon the water, a little higher up."

I looked up, and did see the little bridge; and in a moment more the sound of the horn came again upon the breeze, evidently from our side of the river, and in a little while more the cracking of a whip, and the gallop of a horse was heard, and presently the sand

was flung up around us ; and then the post boy pulled up his little nag, and peeped under the awning, to see who was there, I suppose.

Geoffroi's oxen stopped, out of civility, I dare say, to the postboy's pony ; and the postboy himself dismounting, and moving up to Geoffroi, with the exact proportion of light and easy familiarity which a bearer of *billets-doux* should assume towards the carrier of parcels, he touched his white cotton nightcap, and then offered his hand.

"How do you do, my little fellow?" said Geoffroi, cordially shaking the proffered hand. "Why you are late to-night, Jean?—What kept you back?"

I thought this address a little out of the line of separation which I wished to trace between the parties ; but seeing that the spare boyish figure of the courier did not reach to Geoffroi's shoulder, I set down the freedom of the latter to the score of seniority which, does and ought to level distinctions.

The postboy's back was turned towards me, and I could not help moralizing a moment on the nature of his occupation, which so checks and distorts the human form. "What a pity it is," thought I, "to see this poor little boy doomed for life to a drudgery of pitiful horsemanship, which already begins to stiffen his joints, and shrivel up his limbs to the true horse-jockey standard!" And it was so, in fact, for his diminutive legs and thighs were flattened and bowed out by the friction of the saddle, so as to resemble a pair of old horse-shears, hollowed by constant wear. His large bony knees offered a resistance stronger than flesh and muscles, and were not yet reduced from their unnaturally disproportioned size. His long, tight, leather pantaloons were smooth-worn and polished, and, as he did not wear boots, they shone brightly in the moonlight, as he stood like a Lilliputian colossus, his legs involuntarily straggled open, and his arms akimbo. During my observations here detailed, he replied to Geoffroi's question thus:

"What kept me back! What always keeps me back? What has kept me back from the first, and will to the last, my good friend? Why love! Love, my boy! But no matter—a pair of long spurs make up for lost time, and a merry heart mends a broken fortune. Yes, I am late to-night; but if that clumsy sack-of-meal of the wooden head,* Joseph Antoine François Xavier Dumoulin, the miller, had smoked his tenth cigar, and drunk his beer in better time, I should not have been kept so long waiting to wish his wife good night! Now the secret's out, my boy! Have you got any thing in your flask?"

Always merry, always happy, always successful, my tight little

* I cannot well translate, or even explain, the postboy's pun. *La Tête*, where the miller lived, is a corrupt, or perhaps, a civilized construction of *La tete de buche*, the proper name of the place, and by which the country people always call it. *Tête* (head) was in the old orthography written *Teste*. *De Buche* is the title of the noble family to which the town belonged; and *Buche* means a log of wood. The reader must arrange all these combinations, and then turn the sentence into the most convenient way to make out the pleasantry.

Jean," cried Geoffroi, coming to the cart in search of his brandy bottle.

As for me, I was almost stupified by the intolerable impudence of the little brat, who ventured to talk of intrigue with his squeaking voice, and boasted of a conquest the meaning of which he could scarcely know. What, then, was my surprise, as he turned towards me, looking for the expected dram, to see him raise his cap, and wipe with his handkerchief, a head, bald as a barber's unwigged block, which he felt no shame in exposing to the heavens,—while he raised full upon me a visage which showed the chiseling of sixty summers at least!

"Good God!" cried I, "can all this be true? Does this withered and worn-down abortion think of these things, and is there a miller's wife in all France —." But why bewilder myself or my readers, many of whom have, no doubt, like me, observed and wondered at the unaccountable freaks played by the fancies of women!

When the old sinner (for sinner he was either ways, true or false) had quaffed a glass of Geoffroi's brandy, he prepared to depart. He placed his cap upon his head, and tightening the straps which bound his cloth jacket to the pommel of his saddle—the warmth of the night inducing him to ride in his cotton vest—he gave a finishing tug to his single and fragile girth, and then sprang on his pony's back with wonderful agility for a person of his years, though not, perhaps, with the actual grace of Mercury or young Harry.

"Adieu, then! my dear Geoffroi," cried he; "and what now for the black-eyed maid of the inn? Have you scribbled no notes of your journey, at the rate of a line a league? Ah! curse your father and mother, you dog, who didn't teach you to write faster. Never mind, I'll do the business for you. Half a score kisses on Cazille's pouting lips shall be the token of your safety, and they will, moreover, keep me alive till I meet my little Marie, in the Place Daubine at Bordeaux. Adieu, comrade! Take care of yourself!"

"Farewell, my lad! farewell! But remember I trust to your honor," halloed Geoffroi, with a laugh. The whip cracked—up flew the sand—away went the little courier, shouting "Love forever!" "Love forever!" and a minute or two more the horn gave notice that he was gaining on the road.

"Well, sir," asked Geoffroi, after a long pause, "what do you think of that?"

"Why I think, my friend, that you are a bold man, to trust your mistress in such dangerous hands."

"Dear Cazille!" exclaimed he, and I thought he wiped a tear from his eye as he spoke, "Dear Cazille! I should be, indeed, an unworthy man, if I could not trust you where there *was* danger."

"Have you no fears from this redoubtable fellow?" asked I.

"Poor soul! I only fear that yonder stumbling little pony will break his neck one night. He falls ten times a week, and it is well for little Jean that there is no *pave* in the Landes."

"Does he always go at full gallop?"

"Always, when there's a chance of meeting any one."

"But is his time really lost in the pursuits he boasts of?"

"God help the poor little creature! no, sir, to be sure. Why, I've known him, over and over again, shiver for an hour, concealed in the wood, until he saw some one coming; and then steal out of it, as if he had a mighty affair on his hands. That's pretty much the way he loses his time, I assure you."

"Then you don't believe a word of his boasting?"

"Who could believe the word of a boaster, my good sir? But tell me, sir, have you characters like this in England?"

"Why—really—perhaps—it is possible—that—there—may—be—by chance! one or two—" replied I, and here the conversation dropped.

We reached in a few minutes the little rustic bridge, which, with the watchman's thatched cottage, and a shed for the convenience of travellers, gave a romantic finish to the landscape. The watchman raised the barrier, and received his toll, when Geoffroi began to untackle his oxen, to whom he meant to give some hay and an hour's rest.

I descended from the cart quite recovered from my fatigue. Geoffroi entered the shed, against one of the posts of which he stuck a resin taper, which he lighted at the watchman's hut, and which threw its dull glare upon the river banks, where the moonbeams were so sweetly sleeping. Morning, too, was making rapid strides in the east, and the landscape was thus illumined by a combination of lights such as a painter would have gazed on for its beauty and difficulty. I strolled along the sandy edge of the stream, and looked round upon the exquisite scenery.

I do not think I overrated its beauty at the time, but I could not at all events exaggerate, did I venture to describe what I thought of it. After pacing up and down for some time, I at length lay down on the sand, and gave myself up to meditation.

I retraced hastily in my mind the scenes of the night; and the varieties of character it had shown me; and the new interest with which they had inspired me. But foremost in all my ruminations was the mysterious stranger; and I lost myself in the mazes of conjecture as to who and what he was. I thought of this man so long and so deeply, that I began to give credit to some of those wild theories, at which I had often laughed, of secret sympathies and spells—when I at length started in doubt of myself and all around me, at seeing this identical figure, standing at a short distance from me, by the water's edge.

A group of dwarf firs was between us, and concealed me from his sight; but as he stood bending over the river profoundly buried in thought, I distinguished every feature of his expressive countenance, and I never beheld a finer picture of contemplative melancholy. While he thus stood for some minutes close to me, I felt at once the strongest wish to address him, and the utter impossibility of doing so; but as he turned from the river, and walked slowly away, the spell seemed to quit me. I rose and was preparing to follow him, when the rustling of my feet through the scrub-wood attracted his attention, and he turned quickly round. The moment he perceived me, he put his hand to his bosom, and I saw the hilt of a stiletto ap-

pear from under his cloak. I returned this menacing attitude by taking off my hat and bowing. He seemed a man of that sort which in times of least preparation, can see the state of things at a glance, and as I had disembarassed myself of my gun, which I left in Geoffroi's cart, he divined at once that he had no hostility to apprehend from me. He therefore returned my salutation with easy pride.

"Sir," said I, "I make you no apology, for I have not intentionally thrown myself upon your privacy. Chance has brought me to this spot; but I cannot omit the opportunity of thanking you for your kindness last night."

"I am unwilling to suspect that you pursued me intentionally," said he. "*Individuals* of your nation rarely lend themselves to unworthy deeds; but know, sir, that I am in need of secrecy, and *must* not be broken in upon."

"I know it," replied I, "and—"

"You *know* it! You know *me* then?" and here his hand was raised to grasp the weapon.

"No, sir," cried I, "I know you not. In one word, you have nothing to fear from me. I am an utter stranger—an idle traveller—but fate seems to have thrown me in your way, and I am filled with interest for you. Mistake me not, then, but let me tell you that your daughter and her husband are at this moment in the inn where we met last night."

"Indeed! Arrived already!—Sir, I thank you.—Pardon my suspicions and my rudeness—they are the effects of persecution, and not my nature. I go this moment to meet my child—my dear, dear Stephanie!"

"Hold, I entreat you: there may be danger on your path. There is another person in the inn—a government agent—one who knows you, and whose servility to your daughter and her husband seems to assort ill with the tone in which he talks of you."

At these words my companion paused; looked steadfastly on me; and seemed concentrating the whole powers of his penetration. He spoke.

"You say, sir, you know me not. How am I to reconcile these contradictions? You call yourself a mere stranger. Who is this agent, then, with whom you are so familiar? He has spoken of *me*. Who am I, then? Answer me!"

"Your surprise and your doubts are too natural to give me offence. I met the person I allude to by mere accident in the inn. He is inspector of these forests."

"Oh! it is he? Poor fellow! he dare not harm me.—He has not betrayed my name?"

"No: I am totally ignorant of that;—but I fear, sir, it was interruption only that preserved any secret of yours which may be in his keeping."

"Perhaps so—he is a babbling blockhead."

Then, after another pause, he advanced closer to me, and held forth his hand. "Yes, sir," said he, with warmth, as I took it in mine—"yes, I am convinced of your sincerity. The frankness of your manner makes it impossible to doubt you more. Be satisfied,

too, that I am in no danger. The creature you mention is safe and useful. With all his blustering, he has some good in him, and his own interests bind him closely to mine. Now, sir, farewell. I fly to embrace my sweet child and her noble husband."

"But, sir, you must excuse me still. I cannot part with you, except on condition that, should we meet again, I may consider myself at liberty to address you not quite as a stranger."

"Willingly—most willingly. But it is little likely that we shall meet again. I am the sport of fate, proscription, and tyranny. You are free to walk the world at will. I am chained to these arid deserts as my only safety—and dare not quit them."

"Is it indeed, then, possible that such a man is a mark of vengeance and oppression? You have partly given me your confidence—you have gained my entire esteem. I am free, it is true, but not when an innocent and persecuted fellow-creature may want such humble aid as I can give him. Command me, then, every way, I entreat you—I am wholly at your service."

I spoke this just as I felt it, and there was no chilling hesitation in my tone. Grasping my hand in both his, he replied with solemnity—

"Go not too far, young man, in your opinion of me. Be not rash in connecting yourself with me. The day may come, when you may turn your back on me, and shrink from seeing my face!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed I; "I can never turn from undeserved misfortune, nor from a face which is the mirror of a noble mind."

"Mark me a moment," said he. "You think me innocent. For half the years of my existence, I have borne upon my conscience the brand of guilt and infamy. Secret and deep it has gnawed into my heart, and under the laurels of splendor and success has fixed these furrows on my brow. I am guilty of a great crime—ay, a heinous one! The private punishment has been ever with me, and now the public retribution is at hand.—It is but just too!—I dare not complain, and did the scourge fall fairly on me, I should meet it with a smile. But I am singled out—harrassed—hunted down;—while those far guiltier—atrocious, blood-stained sycophants—are raised upon the ruins which have crushed me. It is that which drives me mad—that, too, which keeps me in this wretched world—for I would not deign to drag this chain of degradation, if it were not gilded with the bright hope of vengeance on those who have twined it round me!"

He seemed, at these words, worked up to a pitch of frenzied animation. He stopped abruptly; then took my hand again in his, and continued more calmly.

"But this is no place for such discourse. I have indeed no right to hold it with you at all. It is, however, soothing to me to repose upon one compassionate heart—and, if your interest is excited for me, we may meet again. I am confined to the fastnesses of this desert of refuge; but there is amongst the woods on the sea-side, not far off, a little forsaken church. Near it I have secured a retreat, and in its vicinity you will be sure to find me. Any one at La Teste will direct you to the church of Arcachon.—You may, probably, see

me there this evening at sunset—and if, on reflection, you will run the hazard, you may be, perhaps, of service to me. Now, sir, farewell for the present. I have no time for further delay."

I assured him of my anxiety in his fate, and repeated my offers of assistance. We then parted. He advanced towards the bridge; and as he walked across it with an air like that of a sovereign prince rather than a refugee criminal, I saw the toll-taker and Geoffroi salute him with the most profound respect. While he proceeded on his way, they seemed to follow him with looks of sympathy and admiration. I advanced towards them, and heard the concluding observation of the toll-taker.

"Ay, ay! I have taken tolls on this bridge for twenty years since he had it built, and I never knew man nor woman to pass it who didn't give him a blessing.—They may take every thing else from him, but they can't rob him of the good-will of the people."

Geoffroi was about to reply, for he gave three or four consecutive pulls to the cuffs of his jacket, rubbed his hands together, and slapped his thigh with the energy preparative to real eloquence, when he observed me close to him, and checked his warmth. He took off his cap to me, and his example was followed by the toll-taker, in a style still more obsequious. They bowed to me over and over again; and I was not slow in perceiving that the civility which I had all along met with from the carrier was increased tenfold by my apparent intimacy with the stranger.

"Well, Geoffroi," asked I, "are you ready to proceed?"

"In a moment, sir.—Do but let me have one look more at the count."

"The count? Does that gentleman bear so high a title?"

"Ah! sir, you may well say that now. They have taken his title, it is true, and doomed him to death; but he is just as sure of the first, and as safe from the latter, as ever he was:—for we will all call him count, and he shall not die while the people of the Landes have strength in their arms, and blood in their veins!"

"No," echoed the toll-taker, "sooner than they should catch him, I would, with my own hands, blow up this bridge to atoms—though each stone of it seems somehow as dear to me as my children, who have every one been born and reared upon its arches! Yes, yes, he is safe enough at this side of the water; but he hazards too much in trusting himself at the forest inn."

"Nay, nay," replied Geoffroi, "he has nothing to fear there, but from that swaggering inspector, who, besides his obligations to the count, owes his present place to the son-in-law. Depend upon it he is too fond of a snug place and a sound skin to venture treachery."

Then turning to me, he continued, "God bless you sir! you brought good news, I am sure, from the countess, or madame Stephanie his daughter.—See how quickly he walks through the heavy sand! Perhaps the appeal against the sentence is decided in his favor!"

"I fear, Geoffroi, that you overrate my intimacy with that gentle man and his affairs. I never saw him till last night—nor did I know his rank till you told me of it."

"What, sir!" exclaimed the carrier, with strong emotion—"what! you don't know him? My God, I have then betrayed him! What have I done! what have I done!"

"No, my good Geoffroi, you have nothing to reproach yourself with. Your error was quite natural, nor have you betrayed anything. I know from himself that he is proscribed, and you have not let his name escape you."

"Thank God I have not! But who could have thought, to see you together, that you were not old friends!"

"We are friends, you see—and when you know the world as well as I do, Geoffroi, you will know that new friends are often worth more than old ones."

"Ah! my mother often told me so, true enough, sir. Friendship, she says, is just like the shoeing of a cart wheel—very tight and close fitting at first, but that it seems to wear out and slip away from one quite naturally, when rubbed a little on the rough causeways of hard fortune."

"Ay," said the tollman, "it is just like that little gate there, which flies wide open to the traveller that holds out money in his hand; but remains close barred and bolted to the poor devil who has not a sou to oil its hinges. It's a poor thing your old friendship!"

"That it is," said Geoffroi; "but yours, I hope, sir, for the count, isn't of such fast wear."

"No, indeed, it is not, my friend. Be satisfied that I am sincere and warm in his interest; but you must not tell me his name for all that."

"Never fear, sir, never fear. I have had too great a fright already not to keep my tongue closer tied in future. Look, sir! There he goes, God bless him! He has just turned into the wood."

"Safe journey to him, and to you too, gentlemen!" cried the tollman, wheeling into his hut.

"Now then, sir," said Geoffroi, "when you like, we are already to start."

In a few minutes more we were in fact on the road, which, being firm and well kept, allowed me to walk without annoyance from the sand. Every step brought us further into a cultivated track. Large patches, at each side of us, were reclaimed from the desert, and grass and corn-fields, occasional comfortable houses, and plantations of forest trees, enlivened the scene.

The sun was risen, rich and proudly as we came to the little town of La Teste. We proceeded at a lively pace down the neat street, and many a nod of welcome was shaken to Geoffroi from the rustic inhabitants, who stood at their doors gaily chattering, and all armed with a huge clasp-knife in one hand, and in the other a large slice of bread, well rubbed with garlic, and eked out with a green fig or a bunch of grapes. Such is the common summer breakfast of these parts. We stopped at a little cottage near the centre of the town, where Geoffroi was received with a truly maternal embrace by its decent looking mistress. I was presented to her in due form by her kind-hearted son; and her particular attentions led me to believe that in his whisper, on our arrival, he had connected my name in some way with that of the stranger—or of the count, if the reader will concede him his title.

I declined, however, entering the cottage, being anxious to take

up my quarters in the neighboring white-washed house, decorated with the sign and title of "the French Crown;" which, meaning merely a piece of money so called, must not be confounded with the regal ornament attaching to the occupier of another residence.—Thither, then, as soon as Geoffroi had put up his oxen, I repaired; and Ranger, my gun, and knapsack, very soon occupied their usual places in my chamber. When I had shaken off the dust and other encumbrances of my twenty-four hours' journey, I had a breakfast of *café au lait*, and then sallied out on my task of observation.

CHAPTER V.

The district of Arcachon, including the little town of La Teste, its capital, is probably one of the most perfect retirements in any part of civilized Europe. Standing on the remote and uncultured border of the bay of Biscay, it is utterly out of the way of communication with the world; and its name is never heard beyond the edges of the forest which surrounds it, except when a maritime report is given of some unhappy vessel beat to pieces by the breakers, which are eternally lashing the desolate sands of its beach. La Teste is very rarely ornamented with the appearance of a stranger. The unbroken intercourse of its inhabitants with one another gives them that sameness of thought and similarity of expression, which is remarked so often between man and wife, sufficiently unfashionable to live much together. Their views, both physical and moral, may be said to be bounded on three sides by desert, and on the fourth by the wide-stretching sea. They are either fishermen, or dealers in the products of the pine-woods: and a few leagues, by land or water, seem the limits of their intelligence. The aspect of the place is wild and flat, yet not unpleasing. At that period of the day when the tide is full in, it is delightful to gaze on the placid lake of Arcachon, for such is the name of the horseshoe excavation, on the deepest ridge of which the town is built. But when the waves recede, and for three miles out nothing is to be seen but a sedgy exposure, it is not easy to imagine a more unattractive landscape. It has none of the sublimities of ocean, for the great Biscayan Gulf is too far out to be visible from this part of the shore. There is however, one remarkable feature in the prospect, which is not without beauty—the accumulation of those sand-heaps far to the right of the lake, which shine in the sunbeams with a dazzling brilliancy, and for a parallel to which we must travel to another portion of the globe. On the left stretches a thick forest, close up to which the waves reach at high tide, when a long circuit must be taken to approach it; but the strand at low water is quite uncovered, and permits those who love the shady solitudes of the wood to reach them by a walk of about half a league.

This wood was the chief object of my research ; for I made myself informed that the church of Arcachon stood buried in its shelter, not far off. Having lounged away some hours in the immediate neighbourhood of the town, and in taking some rapid notes of the preceding day's adventures, I ordered my own and Ranger's dinner, that I might lose no time in commencing my excursion, and advancing towards the interesting interview which I looked for at sunset. My homely, ill-dressed, unpalatable meal, was a practical eulogy on the last evening's repast ; and as I bethought me of the inspector's luxuries, I hoped, for his sake, that the duties of his office never led him to the unseemingly accommodations of " L'Ecu de France."

When I found myself on the borders of the forest, I felt an anxiety which, like all anxieties, was of a mixed nature. Doubt of the stranger's meeting me, interest in his fate, curiosity in his secret, vague conjectures at the nature of his crime, all tended to fill me with a restless impatience. I pondered, and moved onwards along the edge of the sea, without observing any thing to intimate the existence of the church in question. As I proceeded, the broad expanse of the ocean grew upon my sight, and I experienced all those sensations with which it ever inspires me. Its vastness, its measured motion, and the murmuring of its soft waves, as they seemed to melt into the sand, all spoke to me in different ways ; but as it were, in the varying modulation of a common language. I hastened my steps to meet the approaching tide, and was soon standing close to the snowy wreathes, which every wave deposited, like an offering at my feet. I had laid my gun among some scattered rocks behind me, and Ranger took the opportunity of stretching himself in sleep beside it. I was a long time gazing on the waters, as they floated in their self-impelled and waltz-like undulations. There was nothing visible on their bright blue bosom. No ship was in sight ; and a few sea-birds, skimming along, were the only living objects which appeared to dispute my quiet sovereignty over this beauteous scene.

At some distance from the shore stood a low and rudely constructed fort, the apparent remains of a larger work of defence. It seemed ungarrisoned ; and I should have thought it uninhabitable, had not some thin curling smoke, risen from it, and pronounced it to be a signal station, or the refuge of some poor fisherman, living there on sufferance. This lonely mark of the labors of man, in a scene otherwise the exclusive work of nature, gained an importance from its singleness, and fixed my attention. There was something picturesque in its crumbling angles and weed-covered embrasures, which tempted me to record it, in the rough and hasty way in which my pencil usually performed such duties. I took out my book and began to sketch ; but had scarcely traced the first rude outline, when I received a blow from behind, full on the ear ; and before I had time to stagger forward, a pair of lusty arms were wound round me, pinioning mine to my sides, while a chorus of triumphant but hideous shouts nearly deafened me to the violent barking of Ranger, who had flown to my defence.

I struggled with all my might ; and turning round my head, saw a face resting on my shoulder, which no natural sign proclaimed as

woman's, but which was marked as such by the decoration of a cap like those worn by the peasants of the country.

The large black eyes and open mouth which met my view seemed strained beyond all imaginable dimensions, by the exertions which she made to hold me fast. I plunged and struggled with all my energies, she shouting "Pierre! Pierre! Pierre!" with a voice of terrible sound; while a little amphibious-looking monster, something between a fish and a boy, was coiling a huge net round my entangled feet, and shrilly echoing the screams of my assailant.

We were up to our ankles in the water, which flowed fast upon us, and the contest ended in a few seconds by our all three tumbling down into a frothy wave, which rolled over as we sank into the sand. She never let go her hold for a moment, but I had loosened one arm, and, grasping her by the leg which was next it, was gradually getting the mastery, when another figure, still more formidable, came to her succor. This was a man of most ferocious aspect, and in the fierce costume of military service. He had but one arm, which brandished a sabre over my head, and under his stump was my fowling-piece, both barrels pointed full in my face. He roared out to me, in French, a summons to surrender, with a horrible threat of cutting off my head, clear and clean, in case of refusal. My assent was a matter of course; but when he ordered me to stand up, obedience was not so easy. The young imp kept twisting the net faster and faster around me; and the woman proclaimed, by her yells, that she was entangled as firmly as I. I do not know how we got clear, but by simultaneous rollings up the sand, well washed by the waves and wreathed round with seaweed, we at last got beyond the reach of the water, and in a little time were on our legs. The woman, whose masculine voice and aspect were truly terrible, snatched the sabre from the hand of her associate, and never ceased vociferating, in her jargon, abuse, I suppose, to me, and commands to him. He and I had a short parley together, as he stood with my gun cocked in his hand, the barrel resting upon his stump, after the manner of an American rifle-man, the muzzle close to my breast. He told me pithily that I was a spy, and a prisoner, and that I should not, on pain of instant death, make any resistance to accompanying him and his wife to La Teste, to be handed into the keeping of the mayor.

I must confess that no prisoner, I believe, ever felt greater pleasure at a release, than I did at this threat of trial; for the outrage I had suffered, and the appearance of its perpetrators, promised any thing but legal and legitimate consequences. I expressed my readiness, and so we set off. The little urchin, following, as I suppose, the orders of his father, waded away towards the ruined fort, of which I quickly understood the latter was governor. The tender helpmate of this veteran now carefully picked up the sketch-book, and began to wipe the water from its leaves, in which operation, to my utter misery, she scoured out the traces of many an hour's labor. I remonstrated, but in vain. French was Greek to her; and she was but little inclined to accommodate my wishes, even if she had comprehended them. We walked on: this marine Amazon in front, throwing fierce defiance over her shoulder at every step; Ranger

meeking beside me, his tail between his legs; and the old soldier hobbling after, with the gun in its unvarying attitude of hostility and preparation.

The leader of the procession sturdily proceeded at a pace which the rear-guard found it hard to keep up with; and the tide now flowing rapidly up the bank of sand which the waves had raised along the whole course of the bay, we struck into a little opening in the wood on our right. On this manœuvre a halt was commanded by the soldier; and a short council seemed to be held on the propriety of our taking to the forest, as I judged by their gestures. It was decided that we should do so; and indeed the only alternative appeared to be an attempt to wade through the sea to La Teste, a hazardous, if not impossible, proceeding.

Our narrow path was now obstructed, by branches above, and brambles below; and in addition to the risk of one of these catching in the triggers of my gun, and so-executing me on the spot, was the possibility of my tripping up; on which they might put the construction of an attempted escape, and found a fair excuse for decapitating me or blow my brains out—or both. In this way I seriously began to calculate the prudence and possibility of bolting and giving the slip to my escort. But the sea was at one side, and a tangled wood at the other; and I considered that, if even I succeeded in escaping, it would only involve me in difficulties, and mar the meeting with the stranger; while by my making my appearance before the mayor of La Teste, with Geoffroi and my passport to testify for me, there could be no doubt of my release. I therefore cautiously trudged along; and becoming more accustomed to my situation, I began to perceive how much of the ludicrous it contained.

While my conductors kept up an unceasing chatter in their (to me unintelligible) *patois*, I was running through every link of a chain of thought connected with my adventure; which ended in the rather awkward reflection, that some officious subaltern might implicate me as an associate of the proscribed, and for ought I knew, guilty refugee. I was turning in my head a variety of ways for baffling such imputation, when the path we traversed opened out upon a little inclosure of most verdant herbage, and on raising my eyes, I discovered the identical church of Arcachon standing before me.

I stopped for a moment in unfeigned admiration. My conductors stopped also, for the soldier was fatigued by his forest walk, and the women obeyed the orders to halt. "Great God!" thought I, "if thou wert always worshipped in the purity which such a temple and such a solitude as these must inspire, how much worthier would thy votaries be to call upon thy name!"

This beautiful little structure, a chaste model of Grecian architecture, was erected at the expense of the crew and owners of a ship which was wrecked on the shores of the bay; and, being out of the direct resort of the inhabitants of La Teste, is known by the name of "The Sailors' Chapel." A priest was formerly retained, at a regular stipend, to perform duty in it; and a neat cottage, at the extremity of the grass-plot in front of the church, was his secluded and modest residence. At this time, however, the house was vacant

and the church deserted, except on the anniversary of its patron saint, or when occasional offerings were put up, by crews escaped from the dangers of the sea, or others on the point of embarking to meet them.

I acquired all this knowledge from the fluent communications of the one-armed soldier, who, finding me very tractable, entered warmly into the interest which the church inspired me with, and answered many more inquiries than those which led to the information above detailed.* The woman, however, less conciliating, and not understanding our discourse, shewed signs of impatience, and indulged in some flourishes of rhetoric as well as of the sabre. "March!" was once more the word, and we plunged deep into the embowering branches of the wood.

It was now nearly sunset. I thought of the stranger, and hoped no ill had befallen him. The path was narrow; and as we walked on I could see nothing before me but the stiff cap, broad back, thick legs, and brawny arms of my female escort; until she came suddenly to a full stop, and, with gesticulation worthy of Grimaldi in one of his feminine metamorphoses, she commenced a rapid succession of low curtesies to some one advancing towards us. In the momentary depressions of her head, which bobbed up and down with incalculable vivacity, I was enabled to see beyond it, and discovered, with pleasure and mortification, the exiled wanderer, his daughter and son-in-law, standing in a group before us.

When they caught the eye of the old soldier, he stepped up towards them; and with all the grace which his mutilated frame permitted, he presented arms, standing stiff and erect beside me. Astonishment was in the face of the young man; fear in the chafing features of his wife; while the father, casting on me and my companions a piercing glance, showed a countenance on which suspicion, the twin associate of guilt, was in full display.

There was, it must be confessed, something to warrant a fear of bad faith, in the hostile appearance of my companions, in the way-laying air of our rencontre, at the very time and place which the stranger had fixed on to meet me, but still more in the mixed expression of my look; which might, by a doubting mind, have been well supposed that of a rascally police agent, rejoiced at having entrapped his victim, yet cowardly enough to be ashamed of his vocation. But the exile was still himself. He never flinched from the path, but addressed the saluting veteran. "Why, how now, Pierre! What's this?" Then looking towards me. "And you, sir—How am I to salute you, friend or foe?"

"Oh! as neither one nor the other," replied I; "I am too shabbily placed for the first, and too harmless for the last. I am nothing now, but a positive prisoner and a suspected spy."

"A prisoner and a spy! Why, Pierre, I hope you have not committed another outrage in your capacity of signal-man. You have not used this gentleman ill?"

"H! bless your heart, sir, quite the contrary. Except for that

* See note at the end.

wet jacket, which he got in rolling on the beach with my poor Josephine here, I never granted quarter to a prisoner who was better treated."

"But how comes it that you have dared to make prisoner a stranger and a traveller of such peaceable demeanor?"

It would be rather a puzzling matter to give a literal version of Pierre's reply; but if my readers will make allowance for foreign idiom and blustering, and imagine the old soldier to have been a Chelsea pensioner, recounting the capture of a musing Frenchman near a Martello tower on our coast, the following may be considered a free translation:

"Why, please your honor! as to *daring*, you see, as how I never was backward in that, and when a chap of a foreigner skulks along the wood near my signal post, I think it my duty to take him into custody, without paying compliments. Your honor knows as I keeps a sharp look out both by sea and land; and as no English frigates were to be seen in the bay this morning, something told me as how that something was brewing ashore. It is peace time, to be sure, but that signifies nothing; for we make peace and break it now, as often as we change kings and emperors (touching his hat,) and it is in peace that spies are most dangerous, for such folk rarely venture to show themselves in war. Well, please your honor, as I was saying, I had just twisted the telescope round, and turned its muzzle towards La Teste, and was pretty constantly clapping my eye to the touch-hole, as a body might say, when all of a sudden I marks a man stealing quietly along down the side of the wood. With that I points the gun, the glass I mean, plump upon him; and his knapsack, foraging cap, green jacket, and brown barrelled piece, made me dead sure as he was a rifleman scattering out from a party coming to surprise the fort. Well, I calls Josephine and little Nicolas and myself together, to hold a bit of a council, and we takes another peep at the lad as he sloped down towards us. We sees at once, by his fair complexion, fresh color, and close shaved chops, that he was an Englishman; so taking my sabre in my hand, and loading my wife and child with the large mackerel net, we makes a quiet sortie out of the fort, and places ourselves in the wood hard by. Well, at last up comes the enemy, and we sees him halt and take up a position just in front of the fort; when thinking, no doubt, that it was abandoned, and nobody near, he lays his musket on a rock close by the shore, and plants his dog, which is prisoner also you see, as sentry upon it. If any more proof was wanting, your honor, what does he do, but pulls out a book and begins taking a view of the fort, which made me certain that he was nothing but a shabby bit of a spy, and no scout nor rifleman after all. So seeing as the dog was asleep on his post, we steps out all three to seize the man, and Josephine and Nicolas, being lighter-footed than myself, they soon comes up with him; and what with her arms, and his net, he was soon seized, as fast as the tall German general which your honor and myself made prisoner at Austerlitz. That's all, your honor."

When this recital was finished, the stranger frowned sternly, and cried "Hark ye, Pierre! Your officious conduct will surely be your

ruin. Remember that you have now no friend to screen your excesses. Return his gun to that gentleman, and think yourself well off if he pardons your outrages."

I took the proffered gun, thanked the stranger, smiled on Pierre; and marvelled how a banished refugee maintained such influence over a whole district, every individual of which seemed to know his situation, yet admit his power.

Pierre turned with a scowling, discontented look, to his wife, who had never ceased to bob courtesies from the moment of our meeting the stranger. He addressed her in *Patois*, and seemed to inform her of the rebuke which he had received, for she flung a surly glance upon the party, and turned off abruptly towards the church. Pierre muttered a few sentences in a confused mixture of French and Gascon, and then took his leave with the following speech:

"You are always hard on me, general, always. You call every thing I do excess. What if I did seize the old priest, who was reading his prayer-book by the wood side; or the philosopher, who was gathering shells and what not for the Bordeaux museum! Had I not good reason for thinking that the one was taking notes of some plan for surprising the fort; and the other sounding the depth of the bay with his boat-load of instruments! What am I there for but to look sharp at all comers, and what is a priest or a philosopher to me, more than any other foe to fair play and plain dealing? But don't look angry, general. You know I'd die twenty times sooner than offend you! God bless you, and prosper you always, and every where! Adieu, gentlemen and madam!" With these words he limped away after his discomfited helpmate.

The stranger then took me by the hand, saying in a kind tone, "You have not to boast, sir, of the hospitality or politeness of our country. Suspicion and ill treatment have pursued and fallen upon you, but you will excuse rude manners and troublesome times.—Stephanie and Eugene! receive this gentleman with that consideration which only may atone for your last night's surmises."

The lady and her husband each offered me a hand which I cordially accepted; and some words passed, common-place in their nature, but on which circumstances stamped a more than common value. During the discourse of Pierre, I had closely observed the interesting group, and saw enough to tell me they were in deep distress. Her eyes were red and swollen, and her cheeks pale. Her husband's countenance bore marks of great agitation. The father alone seemed composed in the grief which his situation had excited. After the interchange of the civilities just mentioned, I prepared to take my leave; But on my doing so, the stranger said—"No, no, sir, you must not part from us so. I see the delicacy which actuates you, but your company is a solace to us at this moment; and although the intelligence brought me by my children precludes the possibility of your serving me, you may not, perhaps, dislike to pass with me the last evening I shall ever see in my native country. Yes, sir, I am now denounced to certain death, if discovered in the land that owes me no trifling gratitude. The last hope for justice lay in an appeal, which has been rejected; and those who have confirmed the sentence

of my destruction now to pant for the means of inflicting it upon me; but I shall thwart them all!—and I may yet return, when least they think of it, to act such part as has ere now been performed, and wipe my injuries out.—But no matter! Excuse me.—”

He here grasped the arm of his son-in-law, and they walked forwards at a hurried pace, deeply conversing; while I, thus left to take charge of the weeping daughter, offered her the support of my arm, and closely followed their steps.

As soon as her sobs allowed her to speak, she exclaimed, in a voice of the most touching sweetness, “Ah! sir, is it not dreadful to see such a being as that—the best, the kindest, the bravest of men, thus driven from the country he has loved so much, and served so well? He whose whole life, as long as my memory can trace it, has been devoted to public services and private virtues; and whose only reproach has been, that in days of passionate enthusiasm he committed one act which in him is called a crime, while his judges and persecutors are the very men who urged, and some of whom participated in the deed. Such, sir, is the justice—such the impartiality of our rulers! Is it not dreadful?”

“It is, indeed, afflicting,” replied I, “to see the instances of wrong inevitable in times of public commotion. But your father has the hope of pardon left him, as he seems secure of escaping from his immediate danger!”

“Escaping! Alas! alas! and must he fly as a criminal from the shores which have so often hailed him with shouts of triumph—from the people who have so long enrolled his name with the band of heroes unrivalled in ages of glory! Yes, yes, he must fly; and this night is the last in which I shall gaze on him, perhaps for ever!” Her sobs interrupted her, and I offered no reply.

We had by this time reached the church, on the green lawn in front of which the stranger and his son-in-law were pacing up and down, with papers in their hands, which seemed wholly to absorb them. Unwilling to interrupt them, and hoping to gain on the confidence of my lovely companion, I led her towards the church, and we walked silently awhile under its classic portico.

There was something oppressively solemn in the scene, yet I felt as if I would not have changed it for one of life's lightest. As I contemplated the figures, with whose sorrows I had thus become associated, and while thousands of varying imaginings rushed upon me, I was astonished by the distant sound of vocal music. The lady and I stopped at the same moment, and I asked her, “Did you hear that strain?”

She answered me by suffocating sobs.

After a short interval, the sounds came again, nearer and more plainly. At this repetition of them, the stranger and his son-in-law paused suddenly in their discourse, and the former stepped quickly towards the clergyman's cottage and unlocked the door, which, taking out the key, he entered and locked after him. The husband came up towards us, and having spoken a few words to his wife in an under tone, requesting me to take charge of her for awhile. I willingly undertook the office, and he stepped across the grass-plot,

and knocked at the cottage door. It was opened; he entered, and the windows being all closely shut, there was no appearance of the house being so tenanted.

The sounds of the chorus became now more distinct, and more continuous as they approached. It was evidently a religious song, and chanted by a choir of not unpractised singers. It harmonized well with all that was passing, and threw a soothing melancholy over the sensations I had experienced. Not so with my lovely companion. As the voices came more fully towards us, her agitation increased; and my surprise was soon changed to painful sympathy, when she whispered me, in snatched and almost inaudible sentences, that the music proceeded from the rustic choristers of La Teste, accompany a procession of sailors, who came, as was the custom, to offer up their prayers before embarking with the night tide, in the little vessel which was to bear her father from his country and friends. Having thus explained the cause of her emotion, she drew her cloak around her, and leaned on my arm to witness the scene.

A verger first approached, and opened the door, and was followed by some children carrying baskets of flowers, which they scattered on their path. The singers, male and female, habited in white surplices, next came on, and then the priest advanced with measured steps. He was followed by the sailors, amounting to about ten or a dozen; each one carrying a taper, and most of them bearing some simple *ex voto*, such as a bit of cable, a rude daubing of a ship, or other similar offerings. A large party of peasants and inhabitants of the town closed the procession. It entered the church: we followed, and, as we stood leaning against a pillar, I had full leisure to admire the beautifully ornamented altar, the richly carved organ and pulpit, and the windows of stained glass, shining with a mellow richness, as the setting sun poured its full splendor through them. The religious service was soon performed; and that part of it which by its simplicity pleased and interested me most was the repetition of the sailor's parting hymn.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.*

I.

O virgin queen of Heaven,
To whom we raise our prayer,
Thy presence cheers the exile's fears,
And calms the perils that we dare!
Let but thy murmur'd blessing breathe
Across the distant tide,
'T will smoothe those waves the hero braves,
Whose bark we go to guide.

* These lines were written for music, not yet published. The allusion in the last stanza is explained in the note which follows this tale.

H.

For stranger-seas we're bound,
 Which wash the savage shore,
 Where wild winds sweep, in chorus deep,
 To swell the billows' frantic roar.
 Send, then, a seraph from on high,
 To fan with radiant wing
 Our fluttering sails, while gentle gales
 Waft thee the praise we sing.

III.

Our angel-guido shall beam
 Like that celestial form
 Whose wings of gold, in times of old,
 Hush'd on this strand the angry storm;
 And to our sainted patron gave,
 In token of thy love,
 That Heaven-wrought gift man may not lift,
 Nor Hell have power to move.

During this hymn, the emotion of the afflicted daughter increased to a violent degree and at its conclusion she yielded to the movement with which I led her out. In every eye that gazed on her, as we passed down the aisle, I plainly discovered compassion and sympathy, but no one seemed to recognize her; and I thought these feelings were awakened by simple motives of charity for its own sake, without being dependant on any personal excitement. But when we got into the open air, which breathed freshness and relief to my companion, she informed me that every one of the congregation within knew perfectly who she was; but not one would give utterance even to the blessings which they silently poured on her, fearing to add to her distress by any public display. Who would exchange the consolation of such eloquent silence for the heartless and indelicate condolence of the world!

We walked apart, while the assembly left the church, and dispersed in irregular groups through the wood. When the doors were closed, and no one to be seen, the lady advanced to the cottage, and tapped gently at the window. The signal was answered by the appearance of her father and husband, who both offered me their thanks for having accompanied her during the ceremony, which they had thought it imprudent to witness. "For even here, sir," said the exile, "has the spirit of corruption spread itself; and my being publicly discovered might bring down the strong arm of persecution on the whole of this district, whose devotion to me is well known. I am prudent for their and my family's sake—but on my own account indifferent. Now," continued he, "we must go on towards the town. The little bark which my friends have engaged to convey me to another shore lies riding at the mouth of the bay, and at high water a boat is to be in readiness on the beach. The sand-heaps scarcely show the red tinge of the sinking sun. We have no time to lose. Stephanie, my love, retain that gentleman's arm: Eugène

and I have much to talk of yet—and at supper we shall have leisure for our leave-taking. Come on !”

The assumed cheertulness with which he spoke did not conceal from *mé* the melancholy of the speaker, nor produce the effect he wished for on his daughter. We walked onwards according to the arrangement he had made, and for a few minutes no words were exchanged. But there is something in the French heart that must have vent, whether in joy or sorrow. The first is increased, and the latter seems diminished, by communication ; and if sympathy is discovered in the listener, his being a stranger is no obstacle to the confidence.—My fair companion soon, therefore, sought the solace most natural to her sex and nation, and she freely told me, as we walked towards *La Teste*, much of the secret of her father's situation. On two points, however, she observed a caution, which I did not feel at all inclined to remove. She neither mentioned his name, nor the nature of that crime which had called forth his banishment and remorse. The first, she said, she dared not reveal until he was safe from the possibility of detection or betrayal. The latter she could not venture to tell me, lest my national or private prejudices might destroy the sympathy which had been so forcibly excited in her father's favor. I participated in her precaution on both points, and guardedly avoided any expression that might lead to the knowledge of one secret, which must almost necessarily have carried with it that of the other. The fear of learning that the stranger had been guilty of some really serious crime made me shudder. I was not much of a politician, and had great leniency for state offences, which often sprung, I knew, from private virtues. I hoped that the crime of the stranger was of this nature, until I recollected his self-upbraidings ; and then the memory of *d'Enghien*, *Wright*, *Palm*, and *Pichegru*, flashed altogether across my mind.—But I would not dwell upon the possibility, and struggled to get rid of my bewildering conjectures.

“ Whatever may have been his error,” said I, in reply to an observation of the lady, “ It cannot surely have sprung from a vicious heart ; for had it, I am convinced that though your natural affection might make you overlook it, it would have utterly prevented that devotedness which is displayed towards your father by all who know him, from your noble husband, down to the meanest peasant of the land.”

“ If, sir,” said she, “ the act for which he now suffers *was* a crime its effects upon him almost raised it to the dignity of virtue itself ; for such has been his remorse, even through years of splendid prosperity, the consequence of that act, that his whole life has been spent in deeds of benevolence and goodness, from a principle of retribution to mankind.”

I did not then stop to examine deeply the pardonable sophistry of this observation, nor shall I now. It will be more interesting to my readers to learn an instance of that philanthropy by which the affectionate daughter thought her reasoning justified. For the sake of conciseness, I shall relate the circumstance in my own way, but I deprive it of much of its effect by not giving it in her colloquial phrase.

CHAPTER VI

This best loved daughter of the then exile, but once count, general and man of influence and wealth, was sought for in marriage by some of the first characters of the day—anxious for an alliance with such a man as her father, and for the possession of such loveliness as distinguished her. Amongst her suitors was one of those marshals of France, who, with a title of almost the highest rank, possessed a celebrity which none of his illustrious brother-soldiers eclipsed. He was incalculably rich: and his alliance might, at that period, be considered as one of the most splendid which the country afforded. The father, mother, and family of the beautiful Stephanie were delighted with the offer, for they knew nothing of her secret attachment to a younger lover. Eugene de S—, the marshal's aid-de-camp, was twenty years of age. The marshal had numbered more than fifty summers, and his blanch locks did not form a stronger contrast to the dark chestnut of Eugene's flowing hair, than did his stiff and uninviting manners to all that was beautiful and manly in Eugene's person and demeanor. The marshal and his aid-de-camp had been presented to Stephanie on the same day. The public courtship, and the secret attachment, proceeded at the same time, and nearly at the same pace: two or three interviews had decided both, and the rapidity of each was astonishing. The marshal and his aid-de-camp were equally the sport of their feelings. The one was sure of marrying Stephanie, and was raised to the highest pinnacle of an old man's rapture. The other was sure of losing her, and sunk in the depths of youthful despair.

The whole business was so sudden, that Stephanie was half bewildered. Her consent to the alliance had been scarcely demanded; it was proposed, and she made no objection. The surrender of her affections had never been asked; yet they were irrevocably disposed of. The conduct of the rivals, too, was not a little embarrassing. The marshal had never talked of love, but a great deal of the importance of his functions, and the dignity of his station. Eugene had never declared his sentiments, but Stephanie suspected them from his looks, and other tokens which lovers only can understand. But he had not dared to speak out; and the preparations for the union were all arranged, and the day fixed, without his venturing to tell Stephanie, in plain terms, that he loved her. She knew very well that he did love her notwithstanding, and he saw that his passion was returned with an ardor that fully equalled his own. But it seemed utter insanity to indulge the slightest hope; and the young couple mutually and tacitly submitted to the certainty of their despair.

Eugene was the marshal's favorite officer, and it was on him that the negotiations devolved which led to the matrimonial preparatives.

Public business occupied the marshal incessantly up to the very day of his projected wedding; while his youthful deputy was constantly despatched with messages and letters. He had strict orders to bring matters to as speedy a conclusion as possible; for, as the marshal used to say, "The affairs of a great nation ought not to wait on the trifling of individuals."

On the morning fixed on for the wedding, Eugene was sent with a verbal message from the marshal, to be delivered to Stephanie herself. "You will tell her," said the marshal, "that I am in utter despair at being obliged to disappoint her anxiety, and strike such a blow to her affection"—(Eugene's heart was bounding, and almost bursting through his breast)—"but that matters of state have unexpectedly occurred, which make it totally impossible for me to fulfil my engagement to go to church this morning"—(Eugene nearly fainted from emotion)—"until half an hour after the appointed time." Eugene made an obeisance, staggered out of the house, and, more dead than alive, hastened to mount his horse, and rode up to Stephanie's dwelling.

When he arrived, the bustle and magnificence of preparation nearly drove him mad. A Parisian marriage is a grand and boisterous affair, and this was intended to be one of the most distinguished every way. Eugene asked for the count. He was dressing. "The countess?" "Dressing." "Mademoiselle?" "She was already dressed, and anxiously waiting the marshal in the drawing-room."

"Anxiously! I must see her, then, immediately," cried Eugene, in a fierce tone, of which the servants did not comprehend the meaning, and of which Eugene was himself unconscious. He was ushered in, and there sat Stephanie alone, decked out in roses which had no fellow-tinge upon her cheek, and in finery which ill-assorted with her heart's misery. Eugene stammered forth his message in a voice so choked and faltering, that Stephanie, unable to restrain herself, burst into tears. To what frenzy does not excessive love at times drive on his victims! Eugene, for a moment, believed Stephanie's tears to flow from offended vanity and pride, and little suspected that she did not comprehend one word of the marshal's message, while shocked at the appearance and manner of its bearer. The hapless messenger stood awhile dumb and stupefied; but she wept so bitterly, that he could not resist her distress, and advancing some paces towards her, asked if he should summon the servants.

"And would you, for the poor triumph of displaying your power over me, expose my despair?"

"Despair! Power over you! What do I hear? Oh! speak out, speak out, my Stephanie!—Tell me, do I deceive myself, or are these your real sentiments?"

"Spare me—spare me their confession," cried she; "surely you are conscious of my misery!"

"You love me, then!" exclaimed he, throwing himself on his knees before her—"now, then, let me die; I have lived long enough!"

He here took her hand, on which he imprinted a thousand burning kisses—and a scene ensued which not even the actors could describe. They had recovered their calmness in some degree; and were ex-

changing consolations on their mutual despair, when an outrider of the marshal galloped into the court-yard; and in a moment more a servant entered the room, to inform Stephanie that the impatient veteran had abandoned all matters of state and business, and was driving up to the house in the utmost haste. At the abrupt delivery of this message, Eugene started up, hurried to the window, and seeing the superb open carriage containing the marshal, and followed by his splendid suite, he attempted, without knowing what he did, to fly from the scene; but tottered when he reached the middle of the chamber, and fell, without sense or motion, on the floor.

The wretched and fainting Stephanie, roused to sensation, and half frantic, flew towards the sufferer, and threw herself on her knees beside him. She would have cried for help, but she was almost suffocating, and could not utter a sound. In this crisis the door was flung open, and, with all the pomp and solemnity suitable to his state—in came the marshal, ushered by the happy father, leading the mother in his hand, and followed by a crowd of common friends. Imagination may picture the surprise, the disappointment, and the compassion which actuated more or less the several witnesses.

"You love him, then?" said the father, after some broken explanations on the part of Stephanie. "Indeed, indeed, I do!" replied she.

"And you, Captain de S——, you love my daughter?"

"To distraction, count!" cried Eugene, who had recovered his senses, and burned with hope at the turn which affairs were taking.

"Then, by heavens you shall be her husband—and no one but you! What say you marshal?"

"Why, my dear count, I am a man of few words, and it strikes me that little can be said on an affair like the present.—Besides, public business of great importance waits for me—and my functions are manifold. I can only, therefore, assure you that the happiness of your daughter being the first object of my desires—next to the duties which my public functions impose—I am enchanted to have discovered the method of promoting it. I shall, therefore, beg to retire, offering to Mademoiselle Stephanie the assurance of my profound homage, the use of my equipage which waits below, and my advice that she and my friend Eugene set off to the church without delay, nor disappoint the priest and the amiable society which surround me."

The marriage of the lovers was in consequence celebrated, but not quite so quickly as the marshal had recommended; and the count had soon good reason to rejoice in his noble conduct, for the changes of affairs hurled the marshal from all his grandeur, and he soon after died: While Eugene's father having gone over, and remained firm in his allegiance to the new sovereign, the son was enabled to afford very considerable protection to his wife's family and dependents, although without power to screen her father, altogether, as has been already seen.

In addition to this trait of disinterestedness in the character of her father, Madame de S—— made me acquainted with several others of equal liberality; and she accounted for his present influence and security among the people of the Landes, by informing me that

he had been intimately connected with the district, by public employments and constant efforts for its improvement, for the last twenty years

The short twilight of this climate was now passing rapidly over, and when we reached La Teste, it had become nearly dark. As we approached "The French Crown," the exile and Eugene stopped till we joined them, and we then walked all together towards the inn. "Here are, no doubt, your quarters, sir?" asked the exile. "Yes," replied I. "And here, too, are we going to take our last repast together, my daughter," added he, taking one of her hands in both of his.

"Oh say not so, my dear father!" she replied, "There may be yet bright days in store for us: once escaped to a land of liberty, you may securely look forward to some change—and none can be for the worse. Cheer up, my father. I cannot express to you how my heart feels lightened from having communicated to this amiable stranger so many acts of your virtue. Heaven will not, surely, cast off so good a man."

"Ah!" said he, mournfully, "If Heaven did always favor the good in this life, how few would take the trouble to be vicious! But we must hope for that justice hereafter, which we find not here. But how durst I speak thus? Am I not justly punished? Heaven knows my guilt, and will not be appeased. Then let me suffer!"

With these words, rapidly uttered, he rushed into the inn, and mounted the stairs. Eugene and Stephanie followed; and they all three entered a chamber where I observed a table laid with preparations for supper. I was glad to leave them awhile to themselves—so I retired to my room, where I had the luxury of getting rid of my clothes, still soaked from the adventure on the beach. The operation of changing being completed, I descended, and resolved not to intrude upon the privacy of the party above—I was making my way to the kitchen, the usual resort for amusement and information in houses of this kind. As I approached the door, I heard first loud speaking, and then a burst of merriment from several mingled voices, but one of which appeared familiar to my ears. This was succeeded by a hushed attention, while some one spoke to the following effect, in sounds which I thought I recognized.

"Yes, my lads! as I was saying, ****! many a gentleman follows by choice what an artist pursues professionally. If I choose, for example, to cook a supper for a friend, I honor my office, ****! instead of it degrading me.—Hand me that frying-pan, Marie! Jump! ****! if you had but half the activity of your cousin Caxille, there might be some hope of you; but you'll never be more than a slovenly kitchen-wench, never!"

Astonishment and alarm for my friends above held me breathless, as he went on.

"Yes, gentlemen, you may despise the arts of the kitchen; but you forget, ****! that Gallienus, though an emperor, was chiefly famed for his culinary knowledge—that Cadmus the great, great grandfather of Bacchus, and founder of Thebes, was cook to the king of Sidon! do you know?"—

Although sure of my man, I wanted still a visual proof of his identity, and I gently pushed the door, which was already partly open. Before me was the kitchen fire, on one side of which were four sailors drinking, and at the other stood Monsieur the Inspector of the Forests, with his back towards me, his head covered with a white cotton cap, his coat off, his shirt sleeves tucked up, a lugg apron tied round his waist, a knife in one hand, a frying-pan in the other—and altogether, in short, a figure fit for the frontispiece of a cookery book. The flow of his eloquence was for a moment interrupted by his occupation; and as I had seen and heard enough to satisfy me every way, I made a precipitate retreat up stairs, and without any ceremony, entered the room where the party was seated.

"Pardon me, sir," said I, addressing the principal personage; "I do not wish needlessly to alarm you, but I fear there is danger of your being discovered!"

"How!" exclaimed the two gentlemen, starting from their chairs, "Have you seen any one?"

"Yes," said I, "that very questionable person the inspector of the forests is at this moment in the house."

"Indeed! In the kitchen, I hope," said the father.

"Is that all?" cried Eugene.

"Oh! poor La Broche!" exclaimed Stephanie; and a smile which would, in happier circumstances, have expanded to a hearty laugh, was exhibited on each of their countenances.

"To remove your astonishment, my good sir," said the stranger, "knew that that poor fellow was my cook for many years, until, through the interest of my son-in-law here, when I was ruined, he got the appointment which now brings him to this place—that he has been the chief instrument in procuring means for my escape—and is at this moment dressing my supper, as a last mark of respect."

"Your cook! Is it possible!" exclaimed I—"but he has been a soldier—a serjeant of dragoons?"

"Yes, yes, he had the rank to entitle him to forage and allowances."

"Known to, and distinguished by all the marshals, and most of the generals, for his courage?"

"For his cowardice, his conceit, and his cookery."

"He has made the campaigns of Italy, Germany and Russia?"

"True; in my kitchen."

"Then his wounds?"

"His wounds!"

"Yes! the loss of his finger?"

"Oh! in chopping off the tail of a leg of mutton."

"The scar on his forehead?"

"Received in falling over an iron pot one evening, when drunk."

"The cut across his cheek?"

"Given him by a scullion with a carving knife, in return for a volley of curses, and the stroke of a soup-ladle on the shoulders."

"But his fluent discourse—his knowledge of ancient names—his acquaintance with Cadmus, Bacchus, Gallienus, Lycurgus, Apicius——?"

"Picked up here and there from books which touch upon cookery,

and strung together for his use, most probably by some poor pedagogue."

"Is it possible?"

"Are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly!"

"Then sit down to supper, for here it comes."

And true enough the supper was coming, for the savory fumes of soup appeared at the door; and in the midst of them was enveloped the fiery face of the inspector, who bore himself the smoking tureen. He advanced with proud strides toward the table, and was just in the act of placing the tureen in the centre, when, by ill luck, his eyes encountered mine, fixed full upon him with a stare of many combinations. The shock was like that of an electric battery, and made him bound and spring sideways, plump against Ranger, who lay stretched under a corner of the table-cloth, when he stumbled and fell upon the fragile table, which broke down with a crash, mingling in one common ruin, soup, dishes, plates, glasses, and all the paraphernalia of the forthcoming repast.

Curses from the inspector—roars of laughter from Eugene and myself—screams of inquiry from the landlady, and of explanation from the maid—with piercing yells from poor Ranger, who was more frightened than hurt, formed the accompaniments to this exhibition of mishap. Even the exile and Stephanie found it impossible to resist a momentary feeling of mirth—but he soon relapsed into serious looks, and Eugene and I caught the contagion; the landlady and the maid hushed their screams, and put on grave faces, from veneration to the count; Stephanie was silent and sad; so when the mortified inspector scrambled out of the ruins and stood before us, wiping the soup from his face with his drenched and scalding night-cap he met nothing but a group of blank and dismal countenances, on which to repose his agitation.

"* * * *!" said he, looking woefully at me, "what devil has brought you here to catch me in this pickle, and destroy the best *consommée* ever tasted within the walls of The French Crown?"

He was quite crest-fallen, and had totally lost his bullying tone.—I pitied the poor fellow, for I remembered his hospitality; and I liked the humility which made him, for gratitude, descend from his new-born honors to his former station. I therefore stretched out my hand to him, saying, "Never mind, never mind, Monsieur the Inspector: we can all sup without soup, I am certain."

"Oh yes! that we can," was echoed round; and he looked somewhat consoled.

"But * * * *!" to be caught in a cook's cap and apron!"

"What of that!" said I. "A gentleman often follows by choice what an artist pursues professionally—and if you choose to cook a supper for a friend, you honor the office, instead of its degrading you."

"A generous sentiment. * * * *!" and expressed in my own words! Yes," added he, winking significantly yet respectfully towards the others, "yes, these gentlemen and this lady know that I have dabbled in the kitchen as an amateur, and like now and then

to relax my labors—fanning myself with a gridiron, or shaking hands with a stewpan." * This sally was followed by the self-approving laugh (which yet tingles in my reader's ears, I hope,) for it appeared that the inspector could not restrain his jocularity, even in the presence of his patrons.

"Well, well, La Broche," said the exile, "forget the soup, and think now of what follows it. Go, change your uncomfortable trappings, and join us at the supper which we owe to your skill. Make haste; for you know time does not wait for me, nor tide neither."

The inspector bowed low, and retreated to arrange his toilette.—The exile heaved a deep sigh, the first which had escaped him in my presence. His children echoed it more heavily; and their sadness infected me. The new modelling the architecture of the tables diverted my attention for a while; and supper was soon followed by the appearance of the re-organized inspector, who took a chair at one end of the table, with an ease, as if he was quite in his proper place; and he was treated by his former master with a cordiality which would look odd to persons not accustomed to the continent of Europe, but which, somehow, does not *there* seem at all undignified or degrading.

The repast went silently on, four-fifths of the party lost in thought—the remaining one more substantially employed. When the inspector appeared to be about half-done eating, and the rest of us were entirely satisfied, the door was opened by the landlady, who advanced, with a corner of her apron to her eyes, and sobbed out to the exile that a poor fellow below-stairs entreated permission to come up, and express his gratitude and duty.

"No, my good woman, not now," said the exile: "do spare me any unnecessary scenes of sorrow."

"Ah! sir, it is not sorrow that makes me weep just now. There will be time enough for that in half an hour: hence—when you are going to leave us for ever, and perhaps to be swallowed up in the wide ocean, or dashed to pieces against the rocks. You will see that I can be as sorrowful then as any one in La Teste; but at present I am crying for happiness, because poor Geoffroi, the carrier, is laughing and crying, and singing and dancing altogether in the kitchen, half wild with joy."

This combination of methodical sentiment, horrible anticipations, and ill-timed happiness, was sufficiently ludicrous to light up the features of the exile with another gleam—but it was like the latent glimmer of an expiring lamp, for he smiled no more that night.

"Then let poor Geoffroi come up. It will be a comfort to me to see one happy in this heavy hour, and honest enough to put on no mask of sorrow. Send him up!"

The landlady tripped across the room, and called shrilly at the door for Geoffroi, who answered in person, by popping in his head, as soon almost as she had pronounced his name.

* This last remark appears to have been borrowed, heaven knows how from that savory work "The Cook's Oracle;"—a book which every man must relish, who likes sound sense garnished with genuine humor, pages of "saucy piquante," and precepts at once philosophic and palatable.

"Here am I, sir," said he; "I knew you would let me in, so I followed Madame Benoist up stairs, and waited outside. Oh! my noble count—for I would give you your title though your neck was under the guillotine—how am I to thank your bounty? My heart was breaking for your sake, and you have mended it, all for my own—and a little for Cazille's to be sure. Oh! sir, your generosity has been near killing me—but I am easier now that I can thank you."

"Your discourse is quite a mystery to me, my good fellow—you owe me no thanks.—I have shown you no bounty.—What do you mean?"

"Ah! I knew how it would be, count; and I told my mother, and Madame Benoist below stairs, and Marie, and the sailors all, that you would deny the fact as flat as a criminal at the place of execution."

These home strokes sent out by Geoffroi in the way of illustration did not at all ruffle the exile; but they were torturing to Stephanie and Eugene, and dyed my face a deep scarlet; while the inspector took them so much to heart, that he started up, and with genuine delicacy, called out fiercely to Geoffroi,

"What do you mean, ***! you sneaking dog, to talk of executions and guillotines to the count there, who is condemned to and flying from both the one and the other? Have you no sense of decorum in your stupid head? Monsieur, you must excuse the fellow's bluntness for his honesty's sake. He's an honest fellow, ***? after all."

"Thank you, Monsieur the inspector," replied Geoffroi; "it is well for every man who has so good an excuse for his roughness. And thank you once more, noble sir, in my own name and that of my dear Cazille. These hundred francs (chinking five gold Napoleons in his hand), these hundred francs will make us the happiest couple in the Landes; and we will bless you for them every day, night and morning—after to-morrow, when, God willing, we shall be married, and not much at leisure for any thing else."

He here blubbered like a child, and laughed most irresistibly; and was meanwhile bowing his way backwards towards the door, when the exile addressed him, in that benevolent and soothing tone which so fixed my attention on our first meeting. "My good Geoffroi, I must not suffer you to load me with unmerited praise. This money did not come from me. My daughter here, or her husband, perhaps, has taken this method of rewarding poor Cazille's attentions and fidelity. For myself, I must candidly confess that I forgot both you and her."

"Why yes," said Stephanie, "I did, indeed, give this sum to Cazille on leaving the inn this morning; but I scarcely know how Geoffroi could have received it without knowing who it came from."

"You gave a hundred francs to Cazille, madame?" exclaimed Geoffroi, hysterically; "then we are rich indeed, for this money came from some other source. I got it half an hour ago from the post-office enclosed in this paper."

He here produced a letter addressed to "Monsieur Geoffroi, the Carrier,

Living with his mother,
La Teste."

Within was written "From a friend;" and in it had been enclosed the five gold pieces.

"Then," exclaimed the exile, "this secret doer of good must have been no other than La Broche himself! Come, come, La Broche, do not be ashamed of a generous deed. Look up, man, and receive the honest fellows thanks."

The inspector waved his hand, in rejection of praise or acknowledgment—rubbed his whiskers—pulled up his shirt collar—muttered a few nothings—and, in short, displayed all the pitiful and paltry flirtations of those who accept of thanks for services never performed.

"What a scoundrel!" thought I to myself, as I turned in disgust towards the window, and while poor Geoffroi loaded his supposed benefactor with blessings, and offers of himself, his cart and oxen, for ever and ever, to carry Monsieur the inspector from La Teste to Bordeaux and back again, with all his stores of eatables—barring fish, which he never admitted among other goods!

The whole party joined in honoring the inspector's liberal donation; and I warrant that Geoffroi is to this day ignorant to whom he owes his wedding gift.

The hour of departure now fast arriving, La Broche was despatched to make the final arrangements with the sailors who waited below. The exile seemed to summon up every energy of his soul to meet the separation from all that was dear to him. His daughter was quite overpowered as the moment arrived; and her temporary calm was succeeded by a whirlwind of anguish and despair. She threw herself on her father's neck, as though she would have clung there for ever; and the scene becoming insupportably painful, I retired from the chamber, quitted the house, and walked out upon the beach.

The night was quite dark, for the moon had not yet risen. There was not a breath of wind. Nothing was to be seen near me but the little boat, just beginning to float on the tide, which was now full in, and three or four fishing vessels with the dusky huts of their owners close by, made visible by their scanty lights. The waves rippled onwards with a mournful murmur, and I thought every thing was suited to the melancholy of the moment. In less than ten minutes I distinguished the party leaving the inn, lighted by the landlady, the inspector, and Geoffroi. The exile seemed in the act of consoling his daughter, while Eugene stepped on before to place some trifles in the boat. No sooner did they reach the beach, than a number of poor inhabitants came around them, weeping real tears of honest attachment, and sending up prayers which came from the bottom of their hearts. The exile walked through these groups with an air at once noble and gracious; and approaching me, he took me by the hand.

"Well, sir," said I, returning his cordial pressure, "this farewell is surely consolatory."

"It is," replied he, "I acknowledge it. I was always an ambitious man, and loved to believe myself the people's idol. This is the first moment in which I could be certain of their attachment, and it is delightful!"

As the resin torches threw their red glare on his face, I saw that his eyes were swimming in tears.

"No," said he, "they will not out. I would weep, but that is a luxury long, long denied me. You see me moved—I am not ashamed of it. Shouts of victory—my personal sufferings—my children's anguish—the memory of my mourning and desolate wife—nothing could have brought the moisture to my eyes but this unquestionable proof of public regard. This is my proudest triumph. I will and must cherish it."

He then turned to the people, and addressed them for a few minutes in a strain of exalted eloquence and feeling. His discourse having been chiefly political, it is not necessary to attempt a skeleton record of it here. Every sentiment was noble, and every sentence well expressed. He spoke to them of their duties as citizens and subjects; gave them honest and sound advice; and compressed into this brief and unpremeditated harangue matter which a less skilful orator might have swelled to ten times its extent. The effect of this address was prodigious on both the speaker and his audience. Every one of his listeners seemed elevated beyond the common height of feeling and character; and these simple fishermen showed like a band of bold and well-informed beings, while the very women participated in their looks of energy and intelligence.

When he ceased, a murmur of applause ran round the circle which encompassed him; and one voice, more daring than the rest, ventured, or perhaps could not repress, a shout. The impulse thus given, a cheering and simultaneous burst escaped from the crowd, and resounded in a dozen distinct repetitions along the beach.

"Now, my friend," said he, addressing me with a mien glowing with energy, "now then, farewell! Your generous sympathy has sunk deep in my heart; and we may meet, perhaps, again—when I shall be able to express my gratitude in the way I like the best. I am no longer sunk in gloom. Hope sheds her lights upon my soul; and this night, so lately the most miserable, is transformed by her magic touch to the happiest of many a year.—In thus parting from you, I have but one request to make. My name is unknown to you. Do not seek to find it out; for I would not have it reach your knowledge, unaccompanied by the explanation of that crime which has most distinguished it, and which none but I could give you. Should you, however, discover it by chance, and with it learn the secret of my shame and my remorse, shrink not from my recollection as from something monstrous; but remember I am mortal, punished, and penitent!"

I made no answer but by a pressure of the hand—for it was one of those moments in which I dared not trust to words. He acknowledged my reply in the same way, with equal warmth; and then turned towards his daughter. Her aspect was quite changed. She was no longer depressed, or in tears. The eloquence and heroic bearing of

her father, and the enthusiasm it produced in the people, had worked on her as on the rest. She embraced him with fondness, but at the same time with animation. While they were locked in each other's arms, a flash appeared far out in the bay, and then the report of cannon rolled along the waters.

"Hark! The signal for sailing!" exclaimed the exile.

"Away, then, my father, away!" said Stephanie.

"Adieu, noblest, best of men!" cried Eugene.

"Bless you! bless you!" burst from every other tongue. The exile stepped into the boat and seized the helm, as I gazed on his face for the last time. The sailors took their oars—another, and another gun sent out its signal-flash and its swelling peal. Answering shouts from the shore returned the salute—the splashing of the oars on the water soon died away—and the sparkling lustre which they struck from the waves was in a little more lost in the darkness.

I stood for a while riveted to the spot, as the actors of this scene gradually retired. I soon found that I was alone, and I turned my steps towards the inn. In the yard stood Eugene and Stephanie. They were just preparing to mount their horses, being determined to gain the forest inn that night, so as to reach Bordeaux the next morning. They only waited for the inspector, who was to accompany them to the borders of the Landes, where they were to separate, for fear of attracting observation; and, finally, Geoffroi was setting out on foot, to throw himself into Cazille's arms, and entreat her to accompany him to the altar on the morrow.

I took a cordial farewell of the affectionate daughter and her well-matched mate. He parted from me like a friend. Her voice did not falter when she bade me adieu! but I saw her face in the faint light of the hostler's candle. It was deadly pale, and I thought the excitement which hitherto supported her had nearly died away. But on observing her more closely, I remarked a brilliancy in her eyes, which seemed the offspring of some high resolve, and shone on her pallid cheeks—like the sun on a bed of snow—with painful and almost unnatural lustre.

They rode off; and, as I entered the house, the inspector caught my attention, making his way out of the kitchen—his mouth crammed—his jaws at work—a huge unpicked bone in one hand, and a bottle in the other—the first of which he was striving to stuff into his mouth, and the latter into his pocket—while a confused jumble of suffocating sounds was vainly struggling for utterance from his overloaded maw. Geoffroi was ushering him out and carrying his sabre, pistols, whip, and great coat, with the willing obsequiousness of gratitude. I thought them a fine contrast, as I walked up the stairs, and gave to one a smile of good-will and the other a sneer of contempt, while I compared their characters, and shut my door behind me.

I set out the next morning, in a different direction from that by which I had approached La Teste; and that part of the country having no farther interest for me, I left it to be examined more minutely by those to whom it might offer new attractions.

CHAPTER VII.

Distant countries and different pursuits soon called off my attention from dwelling on these scenes ; and in some time from my leaving La Teste, my mind only retained the recollection, but had lost the fresh imprint of my adventure. It so happened, that immediately after having bade adieu to the Landes, I quitted the country altogether, and seas and mountains intervened to cut off the sources of information respecting it. I heard of proscription lists and pardons, and deaths, and other casualties among the condemned or exiled persons obnoxious to punishment, or considered worthy of mercy ; and many names reached me publicly, but not one which gave me any clew to the knowledge of the Exile's fate. I felt also his last request as a serious obligation, and I therefore sought no direct means of obtaining any intimation of his name.

Circumstances threw me once more into France in eighteen months after my parting with him ; and in the midst of that season, when frost and snow with us wrapt comfort in its winding-sheet, and famine stares the wretched in the face, I found myself walking in a richly swelling country—where the olive, the pomegranate, and the fig-tree were still in bloom ; where the hum of bees, and the sighing breath of the south, formed the music of the air ; while orange-groves and myrtles poured a fragrance upon months, which were elsewhere wintery.

I had entered France at a quarter far distant from that which had been the scene of this story, and was, as usual, musing my way through the by-roads of a beautiful landscape, when I came, at the approach of evening, to a village that seemed decorated with all the preparations for a fete. The houses were decked out with the whole finery of their interior ornaments ; and curtains and counterpanes were hung upon the walls ; the treasures of the gardens were displayed in the windows ; festoons dangled across the little street ; preparations for bonfires were ready on the road ; and every one was dressed in the high-holiday costume of the country.

On a rising ground, close to the village, the upper part of a handsome mansion was discoverable through tasteful plantations and vineyards. It had every appearance of wealth and respectability ; and, as the gate which opened on a fine avenue of palm-trees seemed to invite the crowds of peasantry, collecting from every point, I deposited the appendages of my journey in the village inn, and, with my stick in my hand, joined one of the groups which were ascending towards the house.

Whenever I want information on occasions of this nature, I invariably address myself to some old peasant, from whose frankness I am sure of sincerity, while the garrulity of age makes such a chronicler invaluable.

"A joyous scene this, my friend," said I, saluting a little, active

old man, in whose sharp chesnut-colored visage, and fiery black eyes, shone the intelligence which marks the character of his country.

"You may well say that, sir. When an honest man returns to his home, after nearly two years banishment, the scene which welcomes his coming should be joyous; and when the returning exile happens to be of consequence, by rank and wealth, as well as by virtue, it is a proud day for the country."

By one of those irresistible strokes of conviction, which sometimes determine us, on lighter proof than this, I was on the instant satisfied in my own mind that fate had thrown me here to witness the triumphant return of the persecuted and pardoned Exile of the Landes. I burned with excessive curiosity, or any better feeling the reader likes; but I would not suffer a question to escape me that might lead to the mention of the name, which I was now resolved not to hear but from his own lips. I was, however, anxious to be certain that my belief was well grounded, and I went on. "When is the count expected to arrive?"

"In an hour certainly."

"Is the countess at home?"

"Where else should she be on such a day as this?"

"And his daughter and her husband?"

"Oh! they are at the house too, I suppose."

These answers left me no doubt, and I walked up the avenue without any more hesitation; and filled with a nervous yet pleasurable anxiety, which—like a summer breeze on the breast of the ocean—seemed at once to ruffle and warm my bosom.

When we arrived close to the house, the appearance of every thing was beautifully striking. It was an edifice of noble structure, built in the regular and simple majesty of Grecian taste. All was on a princely scale—facade, columns, balcony, and balustrades. In front was an extensive lawn, bounded by a terrace of considerable extent. Here were laid out tables, covered with a profusion of costly refreshments, of which all comers seemed indiscriminately to partake. Several groups of dancers exhibited on the grass—and the music, the flowers, the silk flags, and other emblems of rejoicing, seemed all as it were reflections from a sky of the brightest hue and purest serenity.

My eye sought, amidst the crowd of well-dressed gentry and gaudily-attired peasants, for Stephanie and her husband, but in vain.—It then asked for the mistress of the fete, and soon fixed itself upon the person of a tall and handsome female, whose air of happiness, and hospitable activity, pronounced her to be the object of its inquiry. Knowing that my foreign appearance must have attracted notice, and impatient to explain that I had some claims to offer, in excuse of my apparent intrusion, I advanced towards the lady, and told her that, having arrived by accident in the neighborhood, I had taken the liberty, though a stranger, to join myself to the crowd of visitors who had assembled to hail the joyous event of the day. She replied, with a demeanor of noble courtesy, that none were strangers at such a time—but that all who felt an interest in the return of her husband must be considered in the light of friends.

"Then, madame," said I, "since as a mere unknown you favor me with that title, I cannot resist the pleasure of advancing a claim to it—on slight grounds certainly—but stronger than that universal feeling to which you grant the privilege. In short, madame, I had the honor of the count's acquaintance, as well as that of your amiable daughter and her husband; and it would be difficult to express the sensation with which I anticipate their recognition of me, on such a day as this."

"You are then, sir, really a friend of my husband's!—I say a friend, for all who know him are so. You formed his acquaintance, then, during his hours of exile? You are an American?"

"No, madame, I am a British subject."

"A British subject, and yet my husband's friend! Where then, or under what circumstances, could you have known him?"

At this question I began, for the first instant, to fear that I might be going too far, and was, perhaps, mistaken. It was very possible that some other person might be in question, instead of my exile, and I felt a momentary embarrassment, which prevented my replying directly to the countess's question.

"Ah! sir," said she, "I think I understand you. You are, perhaps, one of those persons who fled from England, during the late order of things, with intelligence to our government—and you may not, under present circumstances, wish to compromise yourself.—Keep, then, your secret, sir,—and excuse my imprudence."

The devil! thought I—am I, on all occasions and circumstances, to appear to the members of this family—if it is the same family—in the loathsome aspect of a spy, an informer, or a traitor!

"Madame, you mistake me," exclaimed I with warmth. "If I could have the pleasure of seeing your daughter or her husband, they could give an answer to your dishonoring supposition."

"Pardon me, sir, I intreat you," cried the countess—"in the confusion and flutter of my feelings, I scarcely know what I say. But here comes my daughter, Madame de V——, and her husband, who will receive you according to your merit, and make my apologies."

The reader may well believe that at the name of Madame de V—— I was thunderstruck, for no sound could be more unlike than it was to that of Madame de S——. I turned round, only to have my worst fears most fully confirmed; for in the lady who approached I saw a total stranger, young and handsome, certainly, but not half as handsome as Madame de S——, of short stature, and inclined to *embonpoint*—while the gentleman, on whose arm she leaned, was a meagre, stiff-looking, powdered personage, of upwards of forty.

"Here, my dear Lucelle," said the countess, in an habitually gracious, but hurried tone, as if her mind was any where but with me—"here is a very particular friend of yours and Monsieur de V——, as well as of your dear father."

Madame de V—— dropped me a low and astonished curtsey; her husband flung upwards a supercilious salutation; and I exclaimed—

"Your pardon, madame. I said neither old nor particular—I said a mere acquaintance—and did not even mention the name of Monsieur de V——. In short, madame, I am all error and confusion. I

quite mistook your house, family, and husband, who I now find is a totally different person from the count, my friend."

"Sir, I am sincerely sorry for your embarrassment. Who—what count could you have meant in similar circumstances with my husband?"

"Who—what count?—Why, madame—really and—honestly—I cannot answer your question! I am quite ignorant of his name it is now a long time since I saw him—and then only once. I can only say, Madame, that his daughter, for whom I had mistaken this lady, was much handsomer—that is, rather taller, madame—and not so fat—somewhat more slender, I should say. In fact, madame, her husband was not so old—I mean he was a good deal younger than this young gentleman. In short their names were Monsieur and Madame de S——, and that is really all I can say on the subject."

"Heavens!" cried Madame de V——, not at all annoyed or confused at my blundering, "the gentleman means my dear sister Stephanie."

"The very same, madame!" exclaimed I, in the utmost delight "Stephanie—your dear sister, Stephanie—and her husband Eugene—your dear brother-in-law Eugene—and your husband—(How stupid?)—your father, I mean, madame. Quite a different looking man—much older—that is, not quite so young looking. In short, ladies, I am enchanted, and almost beside myself, to find that I am right after all," cried I wiping away the dew of agitation and confusion which overspread my brow.

"And you did really know our dear Stephanie, Eugene, and my father?"

"Yes, to be sure I did, my dear madame, and passed several hours with them in the Landes of Gascony, at the very latest moments of your father's stay in France!"

"What! what!" cried the mother and daughter together. "Is it then, indeed, true that we see before us that liberal and generous traveller, who was the solace of those dreadful hours? Are you, sir, that man, and have we hesitated an instant in acknowledging you, my dear, dear sir!"

Here they took each a hand; and I am certain that had I given my countenance to their wishes, they would have each possessed themselves of a cheek as well.

"Ah! my friends," said the mother to the persons around her "look upon this gentleman as one of yourselves. This, then, is he so fondly mentioned by my Stephanie—who was the companion of my dear husband's last lingerings on the shores of his beloved country—and whom Heaven has sent to be the witness of his triumphal return!"

While the company made me their acknowledgments, she continued, "Now, then, sir, you will enter our dwelling in your true capacity as a friend of the house." Follow me; and as you have only seen my husband in the poor disguise of an exiled criminal, let me show his semblance in his days of rank and distinction."

I followed, with Madame V——, by the grand entrance into the house; and, passing through vestibule, ante-chamber, and saloons, reached at length a little *boudoir*—that elegant sanctuary of every Frenchwoman with any pretension to fashion. The furniture and decorations were in a style correspondent to the whole appearance of the house. A recess contained a bed of the most costly kind, from which the countess drew aside the curtain, and displayed, hanging against the wall, a portrait of her husband in the full costume of a general officer, and glowing in the splendid coloring of manly beauty and military distinction. This fine exhibition filled me with delight; and I anticipated with new pride my meeting the noble original as a friend. The transition to his daughter was a matter of course; and I enquired if I was not to have the pleasure of seeing Stephanie and her husband.

"See her! oh! that you shall, sir;" replied the countess with brimful eyes, "and in a situation fitting so rare and inestimable a daughter. You shall see her the returning companion of her father—she who was the comfort and support of his banishment."

"How, madame! I do not comprehend you. Surely Madame de S—— did not accompany her father?"

"No, sir, but she followed him almost immediately. When my dear Stephanie, overpowered by grief, had nearly sunk under its excess, and was roused to a new existence by the eloquent farewell of her father—to which you also were a listener—she took at the moment the inflexible resolution of sharing his exile and his fate. Under that impulse, she hurried his departure, as you saw; and having communicated her intention to her husband, whose thoughts were as her own, they only returned here to embrace me and my dear Lucille. Then hastening with the whole speed of duty and affection they embarked at the nearest port, and, by a happy chance, the ship they sailed in reached the shores of my husband's exile some days before that which carried him; and when he at length landed on the beach, worn out and miserable by his agitated feelings and long voyage, the first signals that he saw were the outstretched arms of his daughter, and his first harbor of repose her throbbing and affectionate bosom. From thenceforward, till the hour when his pardon reached him, did she and her husband pay back their debt of gratitude by entire devotion to his service; and they now—even at this moment—approach together, to share the rapturous welcome of myself and my friends."

Before I had time to express any one of the emotions which this recital excited, the countess resumed. "But at this instant I recall to mind that a letter is in my possession for you, sir."

"A letter for me, madame!"

"Even so—a letter written by my husband on board the vessel the very night you parted from him, and sent by a fishing-boat to La Teste the next morning. It was enclosed to Monsieur de S——, to be given to you; but he and you had alike quitted the place, and it was forwarded to him here, and reached him the very day of his and Stephanie's voluntary banishment—which was indeed that of their arrival from the Landes. Not knowing where to discover you—being

ignorant even of your name—and willing still to hope that there was a chance of your being one day led to this house—they entrusted it to my care, and here it is with the seal unbroken, and the contents sacred from every eye."

During this speech she had opened a satinwood secretary, where, after a little search, she discovered the letter, which she put into my hands. I took it with a mixed sensation of surprise, gratification, and curiosity; and, being anxious to indulge those feelings unobserved, I begged the countess's permission to retire into the shrubbery, where I might be able to do so. She assented—I bowed to her and Madame de V—, and passed out upon the lawn. The crowd had considerably increased; and much bustle was excited by the arrival of an *avant courier*, who announced that the travellers were little more than a league distant, and that their arrival could not be delayed beyond half an hour at furthest.

My heart palpitated with pleasure; and, resolved not to lose a moment in perusing the letter, which I felt an almost necessary preparation for my meeting the count, I passed hastily along the terrace to a little arbor at its extremity. I had a full view of the road, the avenue, and the grand entrance; and I saw the long train of dancers, with their garlands and gay dresses, lining the approach as far as I could distinguish. The air resounded with music—every combination of pleasure seemed to raise my mind to its highest pitch;—and in this mood I broke the seal. The letter was addressed

"To the Generous Stranger.

"On board my vessel. Thursday night.

"We have only just parted; yet I feel the chain of circumstances which brought us together still unbroken—for something whispers me that we shall meet again. Under this impression, I cannot resist the impulse which leads me to address you. One of a thousand probable chances may inform you of my name; and I cannot endure the thought of your learning who and what I am, without knowing why and wherefore I am so.

"In the hurry and confusion which surrounds me, and in the agitation of my harassed mind, I can perform this task but in a broken and imperfect manner.—I cannot presume to call you friend—I will not address you by a colder title—and I expect from your mind that liberality which is promised by your manners.

"You have heard me accuse myself of a great crime—you have heard the expressions of my remorse. I spoke truly in the first instance, and did not exaggerate in the latter. Yes! to me, and me alone, must be attributed the act which, more than all the congregated crimes of ages, stamps the foulest stain upon my country. Yet do not shudder—this act was mine—virtually mine, though many were concerned in its accomplishment. I had the power to have prevented it—to have saved, by one word, my country from shame—myself from infamy—and my—but I outrun myself.

"This self-accusing is all too true—yet, paradoxical as it may seem, this very act was the offspring of excess of virtuous feeling—of that overstrained enthusiasm in politics, which, like religious fanaticism,

hurries its blindfold votaries to the most monstrous deeds. But when this deed was done—when the veil fell from my eyes—when the body of my virtuous and innocent victim was stretched in death, and his blood reeking to the heavens—'twas then that I awoke from my dream—that conviction of my enormity burst upon me, and the demon of vengeance, uprising from the blood-drenched scaffold, seemed to shake before me the scorpion whip of retribution!—Even now I see the phantom scourge—my pores send forth a flood of suffering.

"In the full flush of youthful vigor, I was thrown into the midst of awful events. I saw the monstrous march of despotism, and I flung myself before the fiend, to stop his strides or be crushed in the struggle. It was no common contest. It was the immortal rights of man opposed to the powerful yet paltry workings of tyranny—the wrestlings of liberty with oppression—the clash of intellect with intolerance—the manacled but mighty arm of millions against the nervous pressure of corruption. The popular mind was phrensied—what could be looked for from its actions? We were forced and goaded on to desperation—and the crimson flood of guilt swept alike over tyrants and slaves.

"Will the warning be listened to? Will the despots of our days look back on those which are no more? Or will a bold, yet thoughtful band throw themselves between mobs and tyrants, and force them to their own salvation! The people never cast their eyes behind them. Let their rulers think on the fact, and profit by its knowledge.

"I entered that assembly which was to open the path to my country's freedom, like a young lover burning to embrace the idol of his heart and his mind. My passions were roused—my head on flame. Discussion followed discussion—and frantic denunciations against royalty were the forced fruits of the madness of monarchs. They defied and denounced us. We dared their contempt and their anathemas—we met them in the conflict—and we triumphed!

"In the assembly of the nation, of which I was such a member as I paint myself, I had three friends, over whom my control was so unlimited, that they swore to follow my leading on every question, great or small. The greatest of all questions came.—I had no waverings—I gave my vote—my friends echoed the sound! Fatal and horrid sound! The die was cast—the lists were reckoned—the majority announced. *Four* voices had decided the question—or rather one voice, and that one *mine*! The sentence was DEATH—my king was sacrificed—and I—

A REGICIDE!"

The first effect of this letter upon me was a stupefied astonishment—next came a bitter sorrow, as if I had lost a friend by death—I then resolved to quit the place for ever.

I do not mean to make here a confession of my political faith; but I unhesitatingly avow one of my political feelings, the rather as it is one which I intend religiously to preserve. I mean my repugnance to the persons who condemned Louis XVI. to the scaffold. That some of those persons may have been good men is a startling, but, nevertheless a very proveable theorem. That a vile deed may be done from a mistaken principle of right is too true—but in the cause

of liberty even—the noblest cause of all—there is something which makes us shrink from the name of an assassin. But in the case where it is murder for its own sake—where the victim is the victim of his virtues—where policy and humanity alike forbid the blow—and where it is struck merely that blood may follow it, the mind is almost withered by the influence of the deed it execrates. There is a sorcery in crime of this sort which raises up a spirit of enduring horror. Such I have ever considered the deed in question; and although I have striven to depict one of its perpetrators in the light through which many of them should, no doubt, be viewed—I could not venture the contact of an intimate connexion with even such a man—lest sympathy for the actor might weaken my abhorrence for the act.

My resolution on reading his letter was then instantly formed. I took a path leading to the village, which was visible below me; and as I neared the bottom of the descent, a shout of triumph told me that the count had arrived. I looked to the avenue gate, and saw the carriage stop. The countess and her daughter were there in the midst of the crowd. They received in their arms first Stephanie and her husband; and, lastly, I saw the fine figure of the exile bound upon the earth, and rush into the embraces of his wife.

I caught no glimpse of his face; but turning abruptly to the inn, I made my preparations for immediate departure. While my resolution was unshaken, I determined to place myself out of the reach of temptation—so I took my place in a diligence just then passing through the village, and night quickly fell upon me and the scene from which I fled.

It may appear strange to my readers, but it is, notwithstanding, true, that I am to this day, ignorant of the exile's name. Two reasons prevented my becoming acquainted with it—want of inclination, and want of opportunity. I never asked it from any one; and being out of the way of public people and events, it never reached me accidentally.

I have, however, made inquiries respecting some other personages connected with this story; and late accounts from the neighborhood of the Landes have informed me of some important changes.

Monsieur the inspector, from his unhappy prating propensities, found it utterly impossible to keep secret his connivance at the exile's escape. His own blabbing betrayed what his honest associates never would have divulged; and in the summary punishment of the day, he was deprived of his place, shorn of his honors, and stripped of everything but his culinary knowledge; to which he now owes his support, and devotes his whole attention. He is now, and has been for several years, simply and unadornedly, “*La Broche, Traiteur, Restaurateur*,” at the sign of *Le Grand Gourmand*, in which the wag of a painter has hit off to the life a likeness of the host himself, and which hangs over a shabby little shop off one of the Boulevards of Paris—where any of my readers may dine, any or every day in the year, on soup, three dishes, half a bottle of wine, and bread at discretion—for eighteen pence, and a penny to the waiter.

The Forest Inn is no longer in existence. In one of those terrible

conflagrations which frequently desolate the pine-woods in those parts, the little inn was burned to the ground. Poor Batiste, its nominal master, fell a victim on this occasion to his old habits. Sleep, which was his greatest enjoyment in life, was also his latest, for he was smothered in his bed, after having resisted every effort of his wife to make him rise from his danger. The discensolate widow, seeing her house destroyed, and her old protector removed, had nothing left for it but to abandon the site of the one, and follow the fortunes of the other,—whose helpmate and partner she now is, under the title of Madame La Broche, and ostensibly his bar-woman, house-keeper, and marketmaker.

Little Jean, the postboy, lost his place, or, as I am told he expressed, was flung from his saddle, soon after my acquaintance with him. In a general movement of the great political machine, even this poor atom was displaced. From the postmaster-general down to the postillions, all were turned out, Jean among the rest—when casting his eyes to the capital—like all other aspirants for distinction or intrigue—he worked his passage up to Paris on board the back of a diligence near-wheeler; and is now proprietor and conducteur of one of those little cabriolets which ply between St. Germain and the Place Louis QUINZE, and to which people give, among other homely appellations, that of “*les coucous*.”

Geoffroi and Cazille ply their several trades of carrying dry goods between Bordeaux and La Teste, and giving practical essays on population, at the rate of a boy or a girl a year. My correspondent could not tell whether Geoffroi was happy or miserable in his home—but it has been remarked, by almost all who meet him on the road, that he continually hums one unvarying ditty, the concluding words of which seem to be “*Mine own Cazille*.”

NOTES TO THE EXILE OF THE LANDES.

By far the greatest curiosity of the forest of Arcachon, and one, indeed, of the greatest any where, is the chapel of St. Thomas Ilricus, originally built by the contributions of the fishermen of those parts, and dedicated to the Virgin, in gratitude for a miraculous favor conferred upon their neighborhood in the lifetime of the saint, and somewhat about the year 1521, if the traditionary records of the old people (the only chronicle of the La Testians) be a sufficiently accurate voucher for the date. The venerable Thomas was celebrated, in his time, as a great preacher, and for having exerted his uncommon eloquence against the heretical encroachments, then creeping in upon religion in France; and after sermonizing and anathematizing for some time to little purpose—for the impious work of enlightening the human mind gained ground in spite of his forensic hostility—he resolved on withdrawing from the world, before the vexatious ripening of intellect, which was then in the bud, should overpower, in its blossoming odor, the fragrance of his own sanctity. He, in pursuance of this sage and saintly resolution, turned his steps towards the west.

“The world was all before him where to choose.”

and passing through the hamlet of La Tete de Buche, the original appellation of La Teste, he arrived on the borders of the Lake of Arcachon, where he scooped himself a hut, the site of which is still marked out by the pious visitations of many a pilgrim. Thomas was fond of a solitary ramble, which formed, in spite of time or tide, his daily exercise for body and mind. One evening, while pursuing his favorite walk during the continuance of a tempest, that would probably have driven him to his hut, had not a secret inspiration urged him still to keep abroad, he discovered a vessel far out at sea, in great distress and apparently on the eve of perishing. Not being able to render the least possible assistance otherwise than by his prayers, he betook himself to his knees, and had scarcely commenced an impassioned invocation, when the little vessel, as if it had been possessed of the powers of mortal vision, perceived him, and instantly turned its prow towards the spot where he knelt, and with a rush of sail that

belonged not to any human management, it cut through the mountain-billows, and in an instant traced its frothy path from the utmost verge of the horizon to the edge of the strand on which the anchorite was placed. He, bewildered and fixed in admiration of the miracle, lost all power of speech, for he beheld upon the prow a bright form robed in white, and surrounded by a radiance that he knew to be of Heaven. The hands of this celestial being were raised above his head, as if something was suspended in them. Its bright wings fluttered a moment in the foam of the waves which sparkled in the sunny tints— instant more and all was a blank. The vessel had totally disappeared; whether it sunk in the furious element, or “vanished into thin air,” the monk by no means could divine; and all that he heard to give him a clue for unravelling the miracle, was the flapping of wings above him, and a strain of exquisite melody, that seemed to die away in the upper regions of the heavens. Thomas arose from his posture of devotion, and gazed with a holy wonder on the scene around him. The waves were in a moment still—the sun darted from the clouds, which were scattered across the firmament in a thousand beautiful and fantastic forms of brightness—the roar of the surge was changed to the gentle murmur of the tide, as it flowed in upon the sand, and seemed to sink into it, as if in repose from its recent agitation. At the feet of the monk lay a small image of the Virgin. He approached it with a mixture of devotion and awe; when, to his delight and admiration, it sprang up into his arms where he folded it with a rush of overpowering sensation that may be better imagined than described. He brought the heaven-sent relic to his hut, where he erected a rude altar to its honor; but the rustic inhabitants, thinking such a shrine unworthy the miraculous image, built him a little chapel around the spot. The overflowing of the lake, in one of its accustomed inundations a short time afterwards, levelled the little building to the ground; and when, wonderful to tell the pious rectors attempted to move the little image from its shrine, which the waves had no power to overthrow, it resisted the efforts of dozens of men to remove it; and it was only by the powerful prayers of Thomas that forty pair of the strongest oxen had force sufficient to effect that object. The image, be it known, is full twelve inches in height! Another chapel was built, and another catastrophe was at hand. It was utterly cast down by one of the moving sand-hills, which spared not in its impious progress the holy place, but the im-

age defied its rage. It stood erect amid the desolation, and was seen in the morning after the tempest, perched on the topmost point of the mound that covered the ruin. Once more a fitting receptacle was prepared, and that is the present chapel, the simple elegance of whose outward construction, and whose richly-ornamented interior, are remarkable specimens of good taste and gorgeousness blended together with surprising harmony. The desolate wilds around—the profound seclusion of its site—the deep embowering woods—the superstitious veneration of the simple souls who there offer up their orisons—all the union, in fact, of natural solemnity and religious enthusiasm, give to the place an indescribable and irresistible charm. There is a hermitage close by, inhabited in the summer season by a good and enlightened curate, who is looked on with a veneration more than common, as the direct descendant of the holy Thomas. But it is on the 25th of March, when the *fete* of the village is held, that the traveller, who enjoys such primitive and touching scenes, should place himself at the porch of the chapel, to witness the ceremony of devoting the earliest fish of the season to the Virgin, from whom the image is believed to have been directly sent from Heaven. They believe that it descended directly from Heaven, like the Palladium of the Trojans—or like the Liafail, the enchanted stone brought to Ireland by the first settlers, from which the island received the name of Innisfail.

ORIGINAL NOTE.

The difficulty of writing an explanatory note to this story will be obvious to those who have read it with a feeling that the Author was in a dilemma—one of the horns of which was the necessity of telling the whole truth, and the other that of admitting that he had dealt largely with fiction. How to escape being gored by one or the other of these horns is, I admit, very puzzling. To point out my Hero to public notice by his own name, (supposing me to be now acquainted with it) would be an ungracious task; for however unphilosophical

may be the antipathy I have expressed against persons of his class, there are many who amply share it with me, and who would shrink from not only the culprit but his family, upon whom I am by no means disposed to visit his sins. Whether my turning my back on the Regicide was a spontaneous movement—or whether it was an after-thought to help me in escaping from the embarrassment of my narrative—I cannot yet persuade myself to confess. Beyond the name and station of my Hero there is nothing really worth explaining, for they involve those of the other characters. As to the events of the tale, they are now almost old enough to be called matters of tradition, and consequently of doubtful proof, even if they were ever of much interest. The persons and the facts of the story must, therefore, be left undisturbed, and the reader to his own conclusions. On a collateral point I may be allowed to add one word.

When this tale was written I had but few opportunities of meeting with individuals bowed down with the celebrity of the *Convention*. A later period, and the chances of travelling, brought me into close contact with several of them; and I freely acknowledge that acquaintanceship, more or less familiar, with some of those remarkable men—Sieyes, Barrere, Merlin, Thibaudeau and others—greatly modified the repugnance which, as an abstract feeling, I indulged towards the Regicides collectively. Taken *en masse* they always did, and probably always will, appear to me in the light I have depicted them in the preceding pages. But seen singly—in old age, exile, seclusion, devoted to literary labors, and shunned by society as beings beyond its pale—their aspect was far different. Their store of anecdote and their illustrative sketches of the terrible scenes they had acted in, possessed infinite attraction; while their reasonings on those memorable events, offered many a mitigating, if not convincing, argument in their own favor. But what is written is written; and I am not disposed to alter anything I have said in reference to the subject of their great political crime. My only anxiety at present is lest some of my

expressions may have led to false notions of my opinions on the rise and progress of the first French Revolution. There are many persons who cannot comprehend a writer who goes sincerely for a great principle, but who turns from the bad or bloody road taken by others towards the same goal. An *actor* in the great scramble of political life must often go all lengths with his party to carry out the common object. But an *author*, with the same general views, who only describes the struggle after it is over, is, thank Heaven, under no such necessity. And if his distribution of mingled praise and blame, on the merits of his cause and the faults of its champions, subject him to misapprehension, he must bear it patiently, until an opportunity offers, such as I have availed myself of, in a passage of the story called "The Cagot's Hut," on which I hope some candid and considerate readers will pause for a moment or two, bearing this note in recollection the while.



CARIBERT,
THE BEAR HUNTER.

O you kind gods!
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
The untured and jarring senses, O wind up!
Alack! Alack!
Tis wonder that his life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.—He wakes; speak to him.
SHAKESPEARE.



CARIBERT, THE BEAR HUNTER.

CHAPTER I.

Wind, mist, and darkness are unpleasant accompaniments to ramble in an unknown mountain district. They were all combined, to my great discomfort, the night of my arrival in the valley at the foot of Mount Arbizon, a secluded spot of the central Pyrenees. I was wandering, as usual, without any fixed purpose. In seeking the high places of the earth, I was uninfluenced by any motive of utility or ambition. I am a sorry botanist—know nothing of geology, and was merely desirous of emulating the mighty monarch, who employed himself by marching up the hills, for the sole purpose of coming down again.

A walk of several hours had led me from the summit of the Pic du Midi, to the borders of one of the tributary streams which flow into the river Neste. The weather had not been favorable for observing the country. I had not seen a sun-beam during the whole day.—There had been a constant drizzling rain. Heavy clouds hovered close to the mountains, or sailed along their sides, and as evening closed in, seemed to settle on them, and wrapped them round like mantles for the night. Every thing looked comfortless and drowsy; and myself and my dog took our tone from the scenery. He dodged along, with his nose down—but not to the purpose. He seemed instinctively to push it to the ground, but found no use in it—just as we scribblers, in a mood of dullness, point our pen to the paper from habit, even when it has lost the scent. I had tried various methods, without success, to shake off the weight which oppressed me. I frequently took out my tablets and pencil; but no sooner did something in the shape of a thought seem settling in my brain, than a vapour, like the floating clouds around me, was sure to pass over it, and wipe it out like a sponge. Then, as an *izard** bounded past me I started up, examined the priming of my gun, resolved to be very vigorous—and dropped in a minute or two into the old mood. The day drawled on, and I could do nothing. I had no society with nature; I was myself shockingly bad company; in short I wanted an adventure,—and I found one.

* The Chamois of the Pyrenees.

Accustomed to the rough work of travelling, and not as ignorant of the ways of the people as of those of the country, I had but little personal care to oppress me. I knew I had only to present myself at the door of the first hut, to secure an invitation to enter, and, I had no doubt of finding plenty of habitations in the valley, I took no note of time, and sauntered leisurely along. A thick wood of pines had hitherto concealed the river from me, and when I got fairly on its bank, it was discernible only by the light of some half dozen twinkling stars, occasionally visible. There are few things easier than to lose one's way in such a situation—but I was proof against that accident, for it was all one to me towards what point of the compass I turned. I only wanted shelter for the night; and after a long ineffectual search, I made up my mind that my object was unattainable. Nature itself never wore so inhospitable an aspect. The pine wood was far behind me; and if even disposed to trust myself to that common receptacle of the wolves and bears, I was by no means sure of retracing my steps. I was in a pathless desert, with not a tree to relieve its monotony. The soil was covered with a short grass, soft as velvet, and free from the slightest incumbrance of wood or stone. I could not have desired a better bed, but the curtains of vapor were not quite to my taste. I turned round and round in fruitless hope of discovering even a rock to keep to leeward of, but at length resolved upon dropping down patiently where I was. Ranger whose feelings seemed precisely parallel with mine, wheeled round three or four times, then suddenly plumped himself down in a circular position close by me, and was soundly slumbering in a minute. But I found it more difficult. I had not the same facility for rolling up my body and limbs, or for putting an extinguisher upon my senses; and though overpowered with drowsiness, it seemed impossible for me to sleep. The night was chill as well as damp, and my feet and face felt icy cold. The river sounded sadly below me; and the rapid movement of the clouds without any visible power to urge them on, had something wildly supernatural in it. Fancies of all kinds flitted before me. I had a sudden recollection of every thing in unison with my situation; and half dozing, half awake, ran over the various theories of dreams and ghosts and all such unsubstantial wonders. I at length rocked my mind, as it were, to sleep, with thoughts of Ossian, of children of the mist, of shades of the heroes, etcetera; and as my eyes closed I saw, in inward vision, the old blind bard seated on my breast, his grey locks brushing across my face, while he stooped over his harp, whose tones were tingling in my ears, as the wind murmured gloomily round us. I endeavored to get rid of the pageant, which I felt to be unreal, but I could not for some time succeed in removing. I strove to shake off the phantom; tossed my arms to and fro, and was at length lucky enough to dislodge—not the son of Fingal but my dog Ranger, who had crawled upon me to keep himself, (or perhaps me) warm; while the tinge of his tale was tickling my upper lip, the murmuring river playing the part of the wind, and the tinkling of a little sheep bell acting the dignified melody of the minstrel's lyre.

But the meaner tones of the real instrument were more grateful to

my ears than a whole orchestra of aerial harpers. I sprang upon my feet, snatched up my gun, and descended rapidly towards the river, to the opposite side of which the bell was inviting me. After a short search I found a fordable passage, and quickly following my viewless guide, I came at last into the centre of a browsing flock of goats. I was too grateful, and Ranger too well trained to give them just cause for alarm; but they all took fright at our intrusion, and started, bounced, and capered, in every contorted attitude of attack and defence. As we passed through them unmolestedly and unharmed, I looked for the hut of the goatherd, and soon hit upon a structure of truly primitive architecture. It consisted of four oblong blocks of granite, about three feet high, placed upright to support a shed scantily covered with straw, and walls of wicker work kept together with leaves and clay, scarcely impervious to the keen mountain air. I poked at this building with the muzzle of my gun, and at its third face found the entrance. I called aloud several times, but got no answer. I then stooped down to ascertain if there was a tenant within; and was convinced that there was by affirmative breathings, short, quick, and interrupted, as of a dreamer with Osian's ghost astride his breast, or of a waking creature half choked with fear. I called again, but to no purpose: and feeling with the butt end of my gun, I was convinced it was opposed to a solid obstruction of head, body and limbs. I next placed the gun against the outside, knelt down, inserted my hands, and seizing fast hold of a couple of naked legs, I hauled forth my prize, as an angler exultingly yet cautiously drags a huge salmon out of the water. It was a male mountaineer, of about a hundred pounds weight, and twelve years of age, whose covering consisted of breeches and shirt, and a short woollen mantle fastened at his neck. He lay speechless and motionless, and might have thus silently persuaded me that he was dead, had I not both heard and felt his heart bounding in his breast, as a wild beast plunges against the bars of its cage. I raised him gently on his legs, and as he stood bolt upright, his hair erect, his face deadly pale, his teeth chattering, and every joint in his body shaking like a skeleton on wires, it was quite awful to look at him.

Finding all efforts of coaxing or scolding ineffectual to get from him a confession of life, I bethought me of that universal softener of hearts and soother of alarms—the dram-bottle. I took my brandy flask from my pocket, and applied it to the mouth of the fear-stricken youth. Never did the lips of a new-born babe strain more naturally at its mother's breast—nor those of a languishing lover tasten more firmly on the cheek of his mistress, than did his lips glue themselves to the flask. They sucked in the whole neck, like Chafydis swallowing a fishing smack, and by the time I was able to force it out again, there was not a single drop at the bottom. After a moment's pause I observed the tip of his tongue silyly insinuating itself out of one corner, and making a gradual circuit of his mouth, to gather up the dewy moisture which seemed asking to be taken in. His lips then began to gape and shut convulsively, as an oyster-shell opening for air. The next symptoms of life were the lazy rising up of an eye-lid, and a leer of good nature stealing out from under it.

His horrent locks then sunk down from their elevation, and lay smoothly on his forehead; his trembling had ceased; his whole countenance seemed at once brightening and softening; and in a minute or two he bravely gazed at me, with twinkling eyes and open mouth; and seeing me to be an absolute man, not a monster, he burst into a loud and hearty fit of laughter.

Finding that he was fairly alive, and able to shift for himself, I loosened my hold—but was scarcely less shocked than before, at seeing the poor wretch reel from me, stagger forward, roll sideways, trip and stumble, till he came at last to his fitting equilibrium by dropping down on the grass thoroughly drunk. After several attempts to keep him firmly on his legs, I abandoned all notion of success, but making him, by a mixture of French and Spanish, comprehend my wish to discover a road and a house, he began to pilot me, just as a porpoise rolls along before the prow of a ship. He plunged forward up and down hill, with most surprising and grotesque agility, tumbling heels over head, shouting with all his lungs, "Camino!" "Casa!" "Eau-de-vie!" and other incoherent but appropriate words, until in about a quarter of an hour, I perceived a little hamlet, of three or four rude habitations, from one of which a light streamed forth thro' the open door. My guide had method in his madness; for, in spite of his whispering tone and inveterate hiccup, he made me understand plainly enough that I was not to betray to the family within the house his abandonment of the goats or his patronage of the brandy. I assured him of my discretion; and he took a silent leave of me, with a nod, a wink, and his finger on his lips, as he staggered off in many a deviation from the right line.

Under the rude shed attached to the house, I observed a little pony and a couple of mules, which latter I knew at once, by their size and caparisons, for Spanish. A strong odor of tobacco betrayed the contents of the bales beside them; and I was not slow in conjecturing that the owners, a couple of unlicensed dealers from the other side of the mountains, were enjoying the hospitality of the house. Satisfied as to the nature of the company within, I approached the door, and was met by the host, a middle aged man, who received me without any embarrassment, and seemed marvellously at his ease, considering him to be an encourager of illicit traffic. But these mountaineers have no misgivings regarding any one who presents himself out of the costume of a Gendarme. An eagle in a large wooden cage which hung close to the door, darted out his beak and slapped his wings at me, hospitably, as I was willing to suppose. I entered and sat down without ceremony beside the fire. Two girls, the one of twenty or thereabouts, the other four or five years younger, were occupied in clearing away the remains of supper. I had no appetite but for repose, so I refused the invitation to partake their homely refreshment; but they found Ranger a ready assistant in getting rid of the scraps. On a low bed in one corner of the room, lay two men sleeping, wrapped in cloaks, handkerchiefs tied round their heads, and every line of their swarthy faces speaking Spanish, as plainly as physiognomy could speak. Their brown, broad-leaved hats, with red worsted bands, were flung on the ground, and contrasted strongly with

one of a different cut and pattern, which to my great amazement decorated a long peg stuck in the wall. It was no less than a white leaver, with a green-lined brim, about the depth of a supper plate's, such as the beaux of the Boulevards wear perched upon their top curls, but probably the first and last of its kind ever exhibited in the parts where I fell in with it. A buff-colored glove of the true Parisian texture dangled from within, almost as gracefully as if it had contained the taper fingers of the *petit-maitre* who owned it. Negligently reclining under it, was a loose coat, with its wadded silk flaps flying open as naturally as if it had been on the back of the man, instead of that of a chair; and a pair of delicate Spanish leather boots, with high heels and brass spurs, made up the rest of the visible costume of a gentleman who, my host informed me, occupied the bed in a little closet partitioned off the room where we sat.

Strange anomalies these, thought I, as I viewed the rustic furniture of the room and the rude costume of the family;—and I no doubt, looked what I thought, for the host said 'in his rough way, "Droll enough, sir, is'nt it, to see all this finery in our poor hut? But if you were to see the creature it belongs to, you would stare even wider than at it."

"Some traveller from Paris, I suppose?"

"Yes, that it is. I believe no other place could turn out such a being. We were grievously puzzled at first to know his sex as he came trotting his poney up the valley, with his fine silk coat and wide pantaloons flaunting about him, and his long curls dangling on his face. My poor girls will never get over their envy of his dress, nor care any more for the scent of the wild flowers after his perfumes."

I looked at the daughters to see if their countenances pleaded guilty to this charge of vanity; the younger giggled, tittered and skipped about, played with a tame isard which was striving to sleep in a corner, took up a bit of the silk lined coat, pointed to the little hat, and replied to my gaze by a look of great archness; but the elder sister seemed quite heedless of it. She pursued her employment mechanically, with nothing observable in her manner, but abstraction, and, as I at first thought, stupidity. I turned to the father, and was about to remark that he had no apparent reason to include her in his opinion, when he stopped me short, with a shake of the head and a heavy sigh, addressing his daughter, "Come along Aline, cheer up, look gay my girl. It is not every day that we have such visitors in these wild parts. Do give a smile or two to this gentleman, and your poor father."

His look, as he spoke, was most affectionate. A smile of the tenderest melancholy spread across her face; she raised her large hazel eyes full upon him; they filled in a moment with tears, and to avoid them overflowing, or at least our observation of it, she hurried towards the door. I never saw so sudden a change of countenance—of feature—of aspect. A face which at first appeared scarcely worthy of remark, not plain certainly, but still not pretty, was by one simple touch of sensibility transformed in an instant—for an instant only it is true—into one of infinite charm. I shall leave my readers to discuss the

question whether this susceptibility does or does not constitute beauty. I do not think it necessary to give a more accurate description of Aline. I may once for all say that the women of the upper Pyrenees are commonly plain, coarse, and unintellectual. The admirer of beauty and variety must seek them in the face of nature, not of the *ser*. This general fact has, however, like all others, its exceptions, and I have met a few—one in particular pre-eminently remarkable, and which I hope on some future occasion to introduce to my readers. But Aline was not precisely such, as far as personal appearance went. Her figure was tolerably good, and was, like her face, susceptible of very graceful movement when put in action by some powerful mental impulse. Such, for example, as when she started from the fire place towards the door, to hide her emotion from her father and me. She had many of those moments. I wish my readers had seen her just in *one* of them, and they would have been quite convinced that she was fit to be the heroine of a mountain adventure—or of any adventure which involved in its course deep feeling, and uncommon delicacy of mind. Her sister was a mere child, sprightly and thoughtless, and shewed no evidence of having caught the tone of Aline's disposition.

I was so taken by surprise by this abrupt display of feeling in such a situation, and so certain of its being connected with matter of considerable interest, that I was not disposed to offer any check, in the way of inquiry, to the current that seemed flowing so smoothly. As Aline stood at the door with her back towards us, and appeared to wipe her eyes with a corner of her apron, her father looked at her and me alternately; and when he spoke he might be thought to address both us and himself collectively, like an actor soliloquizing before an audience—only that his tone and expression were perfectly, and without premeditation, natural.

"My poor girl! I see there's no hope for you as long as he lives. Unfortunate wretch that he is, to break such a heart as hers! Poor devil, it is not his fault neither! We are miserable wretches all of us. But God forgive and pity him, he is worst off of all. When is there to be an end of this suffering!"

"My dear father," cried Aline, approaching him, "don't speak in this desponding way. It makes me quite unhappy. And you know this gentleman is not acquainted with our obscure distresses. I assure you I am quite cheerful to-night. Something tells me we shall have good news."

"God grant we may, for his sake, poor fellow, as well as yours," replied the father kissing her. Then addressing me, "You must excuse me, sir. When a man's heart is full of one great grief he forgets what is due both to strangers and friends. But we must not worry you with our misfortunes. Do take something."

I declined once more; and anxious to relieve the evident embarrassment of Aline, I returned to the subject of the sleeping Dandy. I could however get no information further; except that he was half dead with fatigue, when he arrived at sunset, after his ride from Bagnères de Bigorre, the Cheltenham of the Pyrenees, where at one time or another during the summer season, one is sure to meet a large

proportion of the idleness and bile of the higher class of French society.

"What is his object in coming here?" asked I.

"To see the hills, I believe," replied my host. "It is that which brings all you gentlefolk here. God knows what charm our rugged mountains, dark forests, and brawling rivers can have for you. The inhabitants are unfortunate enough in being forced to live in such wilds; but to come into them by choice, and find pleasure in climbing rocks and glaciers and the like, is something we don't understand. Isn't it, Aline?"

"Perhaps, father, it would be as bad to be *forced* to live in Paris. Choice and necessity make all the difference, I think."

"That they do, indeed," said I briskly, pleased with the good sense of a remark that from other lips might have sounded commonplace, but which surprises one coming from a girl of the Pyrenees; and I was, besides, in a mood to give its full share of value to every word uttered by this particular one.

Much inclined as I had been to sleep ten minutes before, I was quite roused and excited by my observation of this father and daughter, and my conjectures relative to her. I soon became satisfied that I could not close my eyes for the night; and there was certainly no very great incitement to repose in the crazy chair on which I sat—the three-legged stools of the rest of the party—or the earthen floor of the hut—the only varieties of accommodation to be had.—I asked my host whether he and his daughters had given up their beds, and left themselves without resting-places. "Why, yes," said he, "we have. The girls could not refuse theirs to the poor gentleman within, who appears very rich, and generous withal. As for me, I am used to such matters. When a man is connected with smugglers, he must be up at all hours; ready to give room for friends, and look out for enemies."

"You avow yourself then to be connected with yonder gentlemen?" said I, pointing to the sleeping Spaniards.

"To be sure I do," replied he, "We all are. How could we live without being so? If I, in this miserable spot, were not to traffic a little in Spanish wool and tobacco, what should I do in winter-time with my family? We might get on in summer gaily enough, while the flocks can feed on the mountains, and we have easy communication with the low grounds. But when the snow chokes us up here, and covers the pasturage, we should starve if we had not a little store laid by from our *industry* in the smuggling line."

"But are you not afraid of detection?"

"Not a bit. The government wouldnt think it worth while to pursue an individual. To root out the trade, they must depopulate the Pyrenees. And it seems, after all, as if Heaven puts us here on purpose for it, just as it permits our tyrants to make the laws, which we could not live without transgressing."

A little further conversation ended in his expressing his regret, for the twentieth time, that they had no bed to offer me just then; but he told me that if I could content myself for an hour or two longer in my chair, his friends would be by that time sufficiently refreshed

to pursue their journey. His house was close to the Spanish frontier, and they had a couple of leagues further to go to the depot on the French side. They were obliged to be there before day break, and would soon be in motion, when I could replace them and repose myself.

I acceded to this plan very readily, but again expressed my anxiety about his daughters.

"Make yourselves easy about them," said he. "Look round there." I did so, and saw stretched across the foot of the bed where the Spaniards lay, the youngest girl sound asleep. "We are not nice here, you see," said the father. "Our poor little Mannette is easily satisfied with a resting place. As for this dear girl, who sits knitting beside me, the best feather bed in the king's palace could not tempt her to sleep to night. Ah! sir, if you knew the weight that lies at her heart, you would only wonder how she holds up her head at all.

Here Aline could not restrain a long drawn sigh, the first that had escaped her. She appeared uneasy, and cast her looks towards the door. "Ah! it is of no use to look out yet, Aline," said the father: "Claude cannot possibly be back before midnight."

"Yes, yes, he could indeed, if he had good news to tell us. A happy message, with his fleet limbs, would have shortened his way across the mountain."

"Wait patiently a little," replied he. "In another hour you may reckon on his coming. It is now about eleven, I think;" looking out, under his hand, at the few stars which were discernible. I looked at my watch, and found him right within ten minutes.

"Well then, father," resumed Aline, "since I must endure another hour's suspense, I insist upon your lying down till then. Senor Manuel and his friend will not start before one o'clock; and I am sure this gentleman will excuse you, and content himself with my company until Claude arrives."

I need scarcely say that I was delighted—most innocently so, at the prospect of this midnight *tete a-tete*. I wanted to know more both of Aline and her story, and I reckoned on making great progress in my acquaintance, if we were left chattering over the fire together. I therefore added my persuasion to the entreaty of Aline; and the father, prompted also, perhaps, by the heavy whispering of sleep, which seemed stealing insensibly over him, consented to remove himself to the shelter of one of the sheds without, where a heap of straw and a blanket (which latter he carried out with him) afforded all the indulgencies necessary to the repose of a hardy mountaineer.

CHAPTER II.

Left to ourselves, Aline and I began very quickly and cordially to enter into conversation. The situation was somewhat singular, and rather amusing; but as she seemed to feel no awkwardness in it, I had, for my part, no objection to keep watch with a single female companion, amidst four or five sleeping neighbors mostly of my own sex. We began to talk on subjects of a very general nature such as the pleasures and privations of a mountain residence compared with those of a town; the occupations of the inhabitants of the hills; the life of the smugglers, and so on. Nothing broke in on our chat but the occasional snoring of the two Spaniards, which being an interruption that was always an assurance of security, there was no secret that might not have been safely disclosed, had we been very communicative. Now the fact was, that Aline was free enough on common subjects, but seemed overcome with a timid reserve when any of my hints or allusions bore in the least upon her own situation. I made several efforts to lead to this, without saying any thing actually startling to her diffidence, but a cloud of deep sorrow seemed immediately settling on her brow, which it required the ingenuity of several minutes to dissipate. Half an hour passed over in this way, and I saw plainly that the attention of my companion was gradually waning off from all I said, and that her nervous anxiety increased with every minute that brought us nearer to midnight, the hour for the expected arrival of her messenger, whoever he might be. As the time approached she became more and more uneasy, made several excuses for moving towards the window and door, from which she looked out as if her gaze would have pierced through the thick mists that hung over the valley. All this was beginning to make me extremely fidgety too. I could not avoid sympathizing with sensations that were evidently so acute, nor resist the impulse that prompted me continually to start up from my chair, go to the door, look out and listen, as if matter of personal moment to me was borne upon every breeze. While I was in one of these involuntary acts of observation—my eyes straining with unaffected earnestness—I heard a shrill whistle blown not far from the house. I started back abruptly towards Aline, and could scarcely refrain from crying out to her that it must be the signal of her messenger. But I was checked from the utterance of a word, by observing the sudden change which her whole appearance had undergone. It was one of those electrical moments which wrought wonders in her. The flush of agitation which was on her face a minute before, was now succeeded by a deadly paleness, and the intense anxiety that seemed only waiting for the signal to make her spring forward to meet her messenger, had given place to a perfect state of immobility. She appeared quite unable to stir. I approached to offer to help her from a seat, but she motioned me to stop: and, after a few seconds, passing her hand across her brow, and then

putting it to her heart, as if a pang had connected the one with the other, she rose up, and giving me one of her deep speaking smiles, she moved firmly towards the door.

As soon as she was observable from without, I heard the voice of a man address her in an under tone. From her reply it appeared that he had invited her to quit the house. "No," said she, "I cannot. You may come in. My father is with the horses, and there is no one awake but a traveller before whom you may speak freely, I am sure." The figure of a man was observable close to her, as she continued: "Now I entreat you, Claude, to tell me his true state in as few words as possible. I am prepared for the worst: is there any hope?"

"My dear Aline, there is always hope, you know, to the last."

"Ah! do not torture me," exclaimed she, her late agitation reviving once more: "I can endure any thing but suspense—Is he recovered—quite recovered? Tell me, Claude, tell me all—even if there should have been a relapse."

"Nay, but my dearest Aline, don't agitate yourself—a relapse, you know, may not be so bad as matters were before."

"Oh God! then he has had a relapse!" cried she, and she sank on the arm of her companion.

"Why yes," said Claude, "he has—I must confess it—but the fit may not last—it may be slight—Hope for the best, dear Aline."

"No, no," exclaimed she, "there is no longer hope. After three relapses, how can I hope? Whom did you see, Claude? His mother was it? What does she say? Tell me all?"

"Why, no," replied Claude, hesitatingly, "I did not actually see her—But—"

"Whom then?" abruptly asked Aline.

"Be composed, my dear girl, and I will tell you all. I saw him. The truth must out—he has *escaped*!"

At the last word of this sentence poor Aline could no longer repress her feelings. A shriek burst from her, and she rushed out of the house, wringing her hands in bitterness of suffering.

This shriek, though more than half suppressed, and less like the loud expression of terror, than the heavy echo of a breaking heart, was enough to rouse the whole society of sleepers. The Spaniards both sprang from their bed, throwing down Mennette who obstructed their passage as she jumped into the middle of the floor. Seeing no one near them but me, a stranger, (for Claude had darted from the door, following the movement of Aline,) these fierce mountaineers instantly seized each a weapon of offence—one grasping his ice hatchet, the other a pistol from beneath a bale of wool that had supported their heads. At this moment the host ran in, interposed between me and the smugglers, and quieted them by a word. He that held the pistol exclaimed in Spanish, "All's right then, is it? We're all friends? Good! But to show you and your company, master Moinard, that I'm well prepared for treachery should I meet it, stand out of my way a little." With these words, striding to the door, he fired his pistol in the air, and was adding in a voice almost as loud as the report, a sentence which began with, "A brace of bullets"—when he was interrupted by piercing screams from the

closet of "Murder! Thieves! Fire!" uttered to my inexpressible surprise, in broad, downright English. The Spaniards at this new alarm, darted without a moments hesitation towards the closet, and burst open the door; I followed, with the host, Manette and Ranger, who joined his voice to the common discord, and close on our heels came Aline, attracted to the house by the report of the pistol, with her companion Claude, as fine a specimen of a mountain hunter as an artist or poet could wish to sketch from. But I shall give his portrait by and by.

On entering the closet, the figure which presented itself was irresistibly risible, and the whole scene, following so quick on the previous situation of my heroine, was a new proof of the close neighborhood of the sublime, or at least of the affecting to the ridiculous. We, every one of us (that is, the Spaniards, Manette, her father and myself,) burst into a fit of loud laughter; and were the pencil of Cruikshank to fill up the rest of this page, I am quite sure that its illustration would make my readers join in a chorus of their own.

Close to the foot of a low and little bed without curtains, with his back against the wall stood in the most unexceptionable boxing attitude, one of the plainest visages and lankest figured men that had ever met my observation. His long legs almost reached from one end of the closet to the other, a green slipper was on one foot, the half of a white jean pantaloon twisted hurriedly about the other, which was as bare from the ankle as its fellow, his shirt open, a silk handkerchief half pushed from his temple, surmounted by a few pointed locks of red hair, and bristling out beneath it a profusion of papillotes in which he had arranged his curls. His long face, staring eyes, open mouth, and pendant mustachios, completed the embodied appearance of Cervantes' immortal imagining. But he wore in his whole aspect and attitude a show of that courage and defiance of danger, which was only laughable to the rest of the party, but which really gratified my national pride as a new and undoubted display of what is common to ninety-nine out of every hundred Englishmen, however ridiculous they choose to make themselves at home or abroad.

Seeing that my countryman, for such he certainly was, although I knew him not, had really nothing of the perilous in his situation, and satisfied from the droll assemblage of French and English in his exclamations, as he vociferated to us to "come on all and attack him if we durst," that he had betrayed himself for a Briton, and so screened himself both from insult and injury, I was resolved not to interfere further, but to leave him to work out his own way; while I abandoned the episode of which he was the hero, to follow the main thread of an adventure more congenial to my actual state of mind.

I therefore addressed Aline, who saw with her prompt glance the true aspect of the case, and glad to escape from the worry of explanation that awaited her in the house, she accepted my advice to retire from the scene accompanied by Claude and me. Reliance on fair appearance seems so much more natural than distrust, to minds unspoiled by worldly feeling, or to those who are glad to break away from it to the general sympathies of nature, that I was not at all surprised to find myself almost firmly established in the confidence

of Aline, and quite self-satisfied that I was her friend, upon even our short acquaintance. A person of her quick perception must have instantly discovered that I was impressed with sentiments towards her at once warm and disinterested. With such a feeling, she seemed to think it quite unnecessary to make any parade of admitting me to a share in the conversation which began between her and Claude, and I, on my part, thought it quite natural that I should join it. Claude appeared to have no more hesitation than I; so we all three sloped off by a spontaneous movement, to a sufficient distance from the deep notes of the Spaniard's mirth, the shrill treble of Mannette's laughter, and the hoarse bass grumbling of the enraged dandy.

"What direction did he take?" asked Aline, in a voice of mournful questioning, and as if her mind had returned without any effort to the subject of her distress, and forgotten with equal ease the recent bustle.

"When I last caught a glimpse of him," replied Claude, "he was wandering about lake Escobous; but," added he, in a tone more depressed, "I think he was making towards the Tourmalet."

"Oh Heavens," cried she in that case I must not lose a moment. For the love of God, Claude, tell me—how did he escape from home, and are you sure he thinks of going to the fatal ravine?"

"Yes, yes, I am quite certain of that. As for his escape, I first heard of it from Simon Guilloteaux of Bastan, whom I met soon after I left you this evening. He told me that in passing by poor madame Lareole's cottage he thought he would just step to the window and ask after Caribert. He did so, and while he believed the poor fellow was lying asleep, he said in a half whisper to the mother, who sat watching by the bed, that the bear hunters were gathering through the parish for the chase to-morrow. No sooner had he said so, than the unfortunate Caribert, who had had the fit coming strong on him all the day, and had just lain down exhausted an hour before, sprang up, and half undressed as he was, rushed towards the window, leaped into the garden and forcing past Simon, who strove in vain to stop him, he darted off, hallooing in the old way, "To the chase, to the chase! Come, father, come!"

"Alas! alas!" sobbed Aline, who could keep silent no longer, but covering her eyes with both her hands wept aloud, while Claude and I assisted to support, but made no effort to console her.

Here then was the whole and sad secret of the poor girl disclosed to me at once, without question on my part, or formal disclosure on hers. There she stands (said I to myself,) mourning her lost lover, lost to every thing that makes life worth keeping, to reason, affection, and it would seem even to the hopes of self-deceiving attachment; for her suffering is that of despair, covering the green grave of buried love. But then, thought I, the cause? The father exclaimed in his soliloquy awhile ago, "God forgive and pity him!" He accused this wretched maniac (for it must have been him) of having broken her heart; he said there was no peace for her while he lived. Why pray for forgiveness for this witless sufferer? Why charge him with her misfortune? By what act did he cause it. Why were her griefs to end with this poor Caribert's life? The

death of a beloved sufferer sets the seal upon hope, it is true, but not upon sorrow. Such were the questions and reflections that involuntarily sprang up in my mind. I was resolved to neglect no fair means for their solution.

When this last irresistible burst of Aline's grief had subsided, and her mind seemed quite made up to the course she meant to follow, she addressed Claude with a composure which had as much in it of deep feeling as of good sense: it was not to be mistaken or argued with. "I am now ready, quite ready, to do my duty. What direction will you take, Claude, while I go towards the Tourmalet?"

"You are determined to go, then," said Claude, in a tone that he wished to have made interrogative, but which was that of positive certainty, as to the fact he would have been glad to doubt.

"Indeed, indeed, I am!" replied she: "I have not so long persisted in performing my painful task to abandon it now, when it is most of all necessary, and most painful too, I must confess. My God! my God! after weeks of expectation—after all the doctor's promises—after all our prayers, that he should now be lost to all hope! It is indeed too bad. Poor unfortunate Caribert!" and here another flood of tears came to her relief; but they were interrupted by the approach of her father, who having arranged matters between the Spaniards and the Englishman, had come out to seek his child, and at the same time to get a confirmation of what he already suspected to be the cause of her absence, and her weeping, which he heard plainly within.

"Well, well, my poor girl," said he, putting his arm round her neck, "it is even as I feared. But we can't help it, Aline. We must submit to the misfortune. He has had a new fit! Is it not so, Claude?"

"Aye, worse than ever. I never saw him so outrageous. The last fortnight's quiet seems to have worked him up to a height of phrenzy beyond all his former ones. It was quite frightful to see him dashing through the rocks above Lake Escoubous, as he bounded off towards the valley of Bastan, bare-headed and with naked feet, which were so lacerated as to leave a track of blood like a wounded lizard."

"Oh Heavens!" cried Aline, "and I am not with him yet! Go, father, go and get me my hood. I cannot enter the house to be detained and questioned by Senor Manuel. You know his way, and it would be sure to be a quarrel between him and Claude. Make haste, my dear father, do make haste."

"Why now, my dear Aline," replied he, wishing to temporize, but evidently awed by her decided, yet affectionate manner, "what would you do for him? You cannot reach the Pic before him; and you know he is in the hands of Providence, which will order every thing for the best."

"What!" exclaimed she, in a louder and more peremptory tone than I had yet heard from her—"Would you wish him then to perish? Would you run the risk of his dashing himself from the horrid precipice in his frantic despair? Would you risk that?" cried she, with increased energy, and grasping his arm.

"Why press me with such shocking questions, Aline? If heaven choose to take him to itself, Heaven knows best."

"Oh father, father?" said she, in a deep reproachful tone, "you make my blood run cold,"—and so saying she moved towards the house with a hurried pace.

"Nay, nay, my daughter—don't leave me in anger. You know my heart bleeds for him—but is not your happiness the whole world to me? Can a thousand lives weigh as heavy as that? Kiss me, Aline.—I'll get your hood for you."

She stepped quickly back and threw her arms round her father's neck, sobbing almost inarticulately, "I know all that to be sure;—but consider, my father, how terrible it is to talk of his death, and such a death too as may await him if I do not make haste."

"Go then, in God's name, go! but the night is so dark—I never saw a thicker mist. You cannot get to the Pic till long after day light, and if he arrives there first, all may be over."

"Oh! I'll run down all the hills, and climb the steeps faster than ever I did. I trust, too, that he cannot have made much way, weak and lame as he is, poor thing! and in such hazy weather; I shall be there first, please Heaven! My hood, father, my hood!"

I thought this was the moment for me to interpose—not to prevent her departure, but to hasten her journey. There was something to me awfully sacred in the duty she was about to fulfil. I was deeply moved by her distress, and the air of mysterious interest of the whole adventure. I thrilled with horror at the imagined view of the frantic wanderer flinging himself from the precipice, which I was convinced from all I had heard, had some terrific connection with his insanity. I had stood, early that morning, by the edge of a chasm in the direction they spoke of, the most appalling I had ever beheld: one formed, as I thought, in a moment of Heaven's deadliest wrath against the world; looking as if the ireful stroke of a thousand concentrated thunderbolts had split the whole body of the mountain from its summit to its roots, and torn open, and scattered down to the vale the huge rocks that lay buried deepest in its heart. In my breathless curiosity to look over the chasm, I had lain down on my face, and crept cautiously along to its vast and broken edge. With one hand twined in the roots of a thick tuft of rhododendron, and the other grasping a jagged piece of granite that stood out over the yawning depth, I cautiously gazed down into it. Shivered fragments of rock of immense magnitude, wrenched as it were from their hold in the earth, first caught my view. Some appeared in the very act of falling down, as they hung balanced in the ocean of the air by a slightithmus of clay and stone, which seemed waiting the first storm-gust to sever it across. Other enormous masses toppled over the abyss, from projecting ledges of earth, not a hundredth part the size of the crags they supported. A few wild flowers and shrubs, dangling from the irregular sides, gave a horrid air of animation to the scene, and looked like living victims suspended over the chasm. One solitary pine-tree with broken branches and withered stem, hung out over the side. Its roots were bare, all but three or four fibres, by which it seemed to cling tremblingly to the cliff where it had been self-planted, as if conscious that the next shower of rain would wash away its scanty bed of earth and precipitate it down below

The whole perpendicular face of this gulf was scared and shivered by the lightnings of countless ages, and innumerable storms. Not a living thing was in sight, but two or three eagles that floated through the sky far beneath me. The clouds rolled away thousands of feet below, and hid the tops of many a lesser hill—for I was then on one of the highest points of the Pyrenees. Every thing further down was lost to me, in the solid mist that seemed settled in the shelter of the ravine. I looked up and saw nothing but the thick haze of dawn, for the sun had not appeared over the furthest edge of the horizon. I had ascended the Pic du Midi to behold its glorious rising. I viewed, instead of it, this scene of harrowing desolation. I shrank back from the precipice, recovered my feet, and hurried off down the smooth eastern side of the mountain, in the direction of that valley, where night brought me into contact with the adventure which led to this digression.

As Aline, her father, and Claude had been conversing, and creating in my mind the deepest sympathy for the unhappy maniac, the memory of my morning's position rushed strongly upon me. As the interest of their subject warmed, my horror seemed increased, and when she spoke of Caribert's dashing himself from the precipice, I could figure no other—none more horrible surely to my imagination. I spoke to her then as one fully impressed with the necessity of speed. "Do, do go, my worthy girl—delay no longer—use no ceremony—take the strange gentleman's horse, and you may yet be in time to save him."

My suggestion was received by the father and Claude with warm approbation. Aline alone seemed to hesitate for a moment; but a word or two strongly urged from the rest of the party, and the repetition of my request decided her. We therefore, cautiously approached the shed where the pony lay, and while the father entered the house to get Aline's hood, and see that all was right with the guests, Claude and I arrayed the little animal in his rude housings, and with some straw, and the blanket which had served for my host's covering during his short repose, we constructed a very tolerable pillion for Aline. The cautious messenger soon returned, bearing her scarlet woollen scarf and hood; and by our joint assistance she was quickly mounted. Having hastily settled that, while she pursued her route directly towards the Tourmalet, to reach the Pic du Midi by the shortest bridle path, Claude was to hasten by the direct way across the mountain to Lake Escoubous, and endeavor to fall in with the maniac, and keep him in observation; the interesting girl bade us adieu and set out on her expedition.

CHAPTER III.

Although Aline was almost immediately out of sight, we were none of us inclined to quit the spot in which she had left such a blank. We stopped, as if by concerted plan, each in his place, and listened to the sound of the little pony's feet, as he cautiously picked his steps over the rough flints which formed the road leading from the house towards my young friend the goat-herd's hovel. His rider, however, soon quitted this tedious path, for we quickly distinguished the echo of his cantering pace, as she pressed him forwards on the smooth turf which bordered the road on either side. The sounds soon died away, overpowered by the boisterous laugh which came occasionally from the house; and when there was no chance of hearing more of our heroine, her father and myself seemed mutually inclined to speak. I was the first to break the silence. "That daughter, my friend," said I, "is indeed a treasure."

"A treasure!" exclaimed he, "she is a wonderful creature, sir; take my word for it you don't know a thousandth part of her worth, or of her value to me ever since I lost her mother ten years ago: and more the pity that she should be ruined in health and happiness by an unlucky madman."

"But," said I, "all may be well with him yet. He may recover his reason."

"God forbid," replied he, quickly. "That would be the worst that could happen."

"How is that?" asked I. "If well over his delirium, she might be married and happy enough after all."

"Married! and to Caribert—Ah! sir, you don't know how matters stand between them. You don't know her story. If you knew that, you would not wonder that I wish him in heaven; unfortunate devil that he is. Until he dies, I tell you, sir, there's no chance of anything but misery for either my daughter this fine lad here, and I might say, for myself too."

My eyes turned towards Claude, whom I had not till this moment had either light or leisure to remark particularly. He leant upon his staff, with a fixed and absent stare, quite abstracted from us and our conversation, and evidently listening, or fancying he listened still, to the distant (and to us audible) sound of Aline's pony. I am sure he was deceiving himself, but the minds of lovers have ears as well as eyes, and it is hard for common observers to measure the space they can see and hear over. It had not before occurred to me, that Claude was actually Aline's lover. I had never asked, or reflected whether or not he was her cousin, or her friend, or some kind messenger. In his bearing towards her there was nothing beyond affectionate and considerate attention. He had none of that involuntary impetuosity in his assiduities—that marked and self-pronouncing privilege to give consolation and advice—that evident conviction of his right to be near her—that natural tone of an influence

over her, which in my notions of a lover's feelings, are blended with all their tenderness, quite in spite of one. Upon reconsidering his whole manner while she was present, and comparing it with his vacant stare on the spot she had so lately occupied, and with the expression of his handsome, intelligent and mild countenance, I was quite satisfied that he *was* her lover, notwithstanding what appeared the almost insuperable obstacles that lay in the way of his passion. He appeared to be about four and twenty years of age, formed for activity rather than fatigue; and as he leaned silently upon his staff in the mild light which the candle sent through the window, he gave me the idea of a kind-hearted, gentle lowland youth, rather than that which we involuntarily attach to the figure of an enterprising mountaineer. It was the singularity of such a figure in these rough regions, and its contrast with the rugged outlines which marked those of my host and the smugglers, and almost all indeed whom I met in this part of the Pyrenees, that pleased me so much. I all at once took a great interest in his affairs: and here avow myself one of those impertinent persons who cannot help doing so, whenever I am much struck by the manners of men—and (since I am in the confessing vein) by the mein of the other sex.

"Look at him, sir, how he stands there thinking," whispered my host, twitching me by the elbow. "That has been his way for more than two years. Never the least flinching from his constancy in all the rebuffs she has given him;—and almost ever since that fellow Caribert went mad, five months back, this fine lad has followed and watched him, as he would a stray goat, all out of love to her: and no hope, as I said before, while *he* lives—nor after, perhaps."

"She preferred poor Caribert, then?" said I, removing, with him, a few paces further from Claude."

"She did so, but heaven only can tell why; for compared to this Claude he was as harsh and rugged as the rock his father was dashed over."

"What did you say?" exclaimed I, with a shudder, for I only caught imperfectly the latter part of his reply, which seemed closed by a muttered curse. "Was his father dashed over a precipice?"

"Ah! I forgot that you didn't know the story. I'll tell you what, sir—wait just awhile till the Spaniards are gone, and the foreigner in bed again, and Claude set out across the mountain, and I'll tell you the whole history of this wretched Caribert, Claude, and my poor daughter. Wait a little, while I go into the house, and set all to rights. Come Claude, my lad, what are you thinking of? Come in with me, and take some supper before you start. You have a long walk before you, and you must be tired I am sure. Rouse up, my lad." He accompanied these words by a clap on Claude's shoulder, and a hearty shake of the hand. Claude answered, that he was a little fatigued, but was in no heart for supping. "I'll just borrow your gun, Monsieur Moinard," added he. "I shall be off across Mount Arbizon, and I may fall in with some *izards*, or perhaps meet the hunters on my path."

"Aye, you shall have the gun with pleasure, for you know how to use it well, and to take care of it too. Come in and we'll get it,

and furnish your flask and your sack with some provisions at any rate, if you can't eat now; come in!"

During this dialogue, I had made up my mind as to my course. Much as I wished for the disclosures promised me by my host, I was resolved not to purchase them by the loss of Claude's company. I had determined to be his companion across the hill; I had hopes of learning from him a great deal of what Moinard had promised to reveal; and above all things I was anxious to fall in again with Aline, whom there was a chance of my seeing, as well as the unfortunate object of her search. I was therefore all impatience to arrange my project with Claude, and to get quietly off from the cottage without any interruption from the group within, whose differences appeared (by their blended voices in the chorus of a drinking song,) to have subsided into a tone of very turbulent harmony.

Notwithstanding all this desire to get deeper into the adventure, I confess I felt an itching to have a parting peep at the British Quixote, and the Spanish heroes, against whom I left him so inclined to run a tilt. I stepped therefore towards the door, and placing myself out of the range of the light shot forth from the candle, I took an observation, myself quite unobserved. The three melodists were seated round the table, which was garnished with brown bread, goat's milk, cheese, a plate of raw onions, the remnant of some dried sausages, a pitcher of water, and a bottle, which I supposed to contain brandy. On these materials the Spaniards had been regaling in preparation for their departure, and while they were now washing down their supper, they each accompanied their draught by the fumes of a cigar. My countryman was similarly furnished; and the whole group presented an appearance of droll associations. One of the smugglers, a huge broad shouldered-fellow, with black bushy hair, and whiskers, and his large mantle wrapped round him, had placed the Dandy's white cockle-shell hat on his head, and in his efforts to keep it balanced while he moved in time to his music, was forced to make several grotesque gesticulations, which threw the laughing Dandy into attitudes of corresponding oddity. He, on his part, wore the Spaniard's immense hat, which completely fell over his face, of which the only part observable to me was the mouth, embellished by his cigar, and opening alternately for the ejection of the smoke or the admission of the grog. He sat without his coat, but he had got little Mannette's red hood thrown scarfwise over his shoulders. His gigantic shadow kept playing along the floor most ludicrously with his motions; while the enlarged profile of the second Spaniard, with his handkerchief still tied round his head, grinned grimly on the wall close to which he sat. Mannette seemed in ecstasy with the scene. She sometimes jumped about the room, dancing to the discord, and snapping her fingers in imitation of castanets. Again she popped down on the side of the bed mimicking the attitude of the dandy, or held her sides in fits of laughter. Claude stood in a corner inattentive to and unnoticed by the singers examining the gun given him by the host who was bustling about the room making preparations for the departure of his various visitors. I could have wished to catch more distinctly the words of the

song. I recognized it for one of those patriotic effusions composed during the late war, which I had heard some months before on another part of the Spanish frontier. It began thus :

Espanoles, la patria oprimida
Os convoca en los campos de honor,
Acudid a su voz imperiosa,
Recobrad nestro antiguo valor.

I forgot the remainder except the concluding stanza, which was impressed on my memory by the reiterated vociferations of the Englishman who, pleased with the final sound, demanded and obtained full half a dozen repetitions of the couplet.

En defensa de causa tan justa,
Toma part el Britano valor;
Tema el mundo tan fuertes naciones
Tiembra de ellas el tirano feroz !
Estrechados en firme alianza
Mueve a entrambos igual interes
Y qual Dios tutelar venerado
Sera siempre de Espana el Ingles.*

To the fine martial air of the song and the sonorous voices of the Spaniards, the delighted and indefatigable dandy joined in loud shouts of "tol de rol lol," "fal de ral lal," "heigh derry down," and every other variety of English chorus, hunting or drinking, thumping on the table, and stamping with all the energy of public spirit. I confess I was much pleased with my odd-looking compatriot. I saw he was a fellow who could feel as well as fight, and I had much ado to resist my inclination of going to grasp him by the hand, and make common cause in the "firme alianza" of the parties. But a little reflection decided me against this movement. I thought that if I announced myself as an Englishman, I might find his companionship a very troublesome encumbrance, and from the same reason, I did not want to encounter a friendly association with the Spaniards. I saw that Claude was very nearly taking the

* At the request of the Englishman, in our after acquaintance, I gave him the following loose notion of these fragments in his own language.

Spaniards, our enemy tramples the land—
We are called by our country to freedom and fame—
Let us fly and obey her loud voice of command,
And react all the glories combined with her name !

In defence of a quarrel so righteous as ours,
The valor of Britain is joined with our own ;
While the world praises loudly the fame of those powers
Which makes Despots sit quivering with fear on each throne,
Interlaced in firm union, no rival between,
Our cause and our interests no tyrant shall sever :
What to Spain all her tutelar gods may have been
Is the Englishman now,—Aye, and shall be forever ;

first step towards his journey, and as no time was to be lost, I determined to enter the house, to gather together Ranger and my other marching accoutrements. I must here say, by way of parenthesis, that I never found any difficulty in passing myself for a Frenchman in this border country, where the natives were insensible to whatever was foreign in my accent, and where, to make myself understood, I was obliged to mix French and Spanish with a large portion of *patois*. I walked in, therefore, and saluted the company with a counterfeit Parisian air, which passed for genuine. The three friends looked significantly at each other, and repeated once more the last line of the song, the Englishman groaning forth like a hoarse echo, the concluding words "*Espana el Ingles*," with a voice that kept the promise of all that was unmusical in his countenance. He seemed anxious to attract my attention: looked quite disposed to take a great national quarrel upon his own narrow shoulders, and thought, as he confessed to me afterwards, that I was a cursed snivelling fellow, for not taking notice of his pointed manner. It did not, however, pass unobserved by me: I noted it down and was highly amused, and not in the least displeased with it. But my business was with Claude, to whom I briefly expressed my intention of joining in his expedition. He readily assented, and our host declared that since I was resolved to go, he would cross to the western side of Mount Arizon along with us, as he had a flock thereabouts which he had not looked after for some days, and whose shepherd, he feared, might take to following the bear hunters if they passed that way.

Matters being thus arranged, it was very desirable to get rid of the Spaniards as quickly as possible. Moinard therefore addressed them in their own language, to the following effect.

"Gentlemen, I know well that he's but a bad fellow that parts good company, but pleasures should always give the wall to business. You know what I mean, *Senor Manuel*. The mules are refreshed, the supper ended, the cock crowing. What time do you think of setting out?"

"By the life of my Saint, Moinard, you are the trustiest of smugglers? Twenty long years that we've worked together, I never knew lass or glass to keep you from trade when aught was to be made of it. So much the better for your daughters, my friend, and the hearty lads who are to have them and their fortunes. Apropos of your girls, what has become of my favorite Aline. I caught a glimpse of her to-night with young Claude here, so I suppose she does not scorn him so much as she did, and that she has left mad Caribert to go hunting as usual with his father's ghost. Is it so?"

Moinard, while he replied, cast an anxious look at Claude, whose cheeks showed symptoms of rising anger. "Why, Manuel, there's no use in touching a string like that. Claude can pick up a little of what you say, and however he may bear scorn from Aline, he won't from another, you know."

"As for that matter," said Manuel, "I should be sorry to hurt the lad's feelings, and I did not know he understood any Spanish." So saying he rose from his seat, and stretched out his hand to Claude, addressing him in *ba l French*, "Come, Claude, my boy, take the hand

of a hearty well-wisher of yours." Claude smiled good naturedly, and shook the proffered hand. "That's a fine honest fellow," continued the Spaniard, "I wish you success with all my heart. I've but one piece of advice to give you. If Aline continues cruel, and takes again to this maniac, come across the mountains one fine day to Puertolas, and I'll introduce you to my little black eyed niece, Antonia, who dances the Bolero as well as any lass in Arragon, and will repay your affection in smiles instead of frowns, I'll warrant her. The mark of a ripe mulberry is washed out by a green one you know, as we say in Spain." *

"Thank you, Senor," replied Claude. "When I have no hope left here, perhaps I'll pay you a visit on the banks of the Cinca;—but not till then I candidly tell you."

"Very well, my lad; come when you like, you are sure of a welcome, I never say one thing and mean another, depend upon it.—Now, Santiago," turning to his comrade, "let's reload the mules. The sun must not catch us this side the depot. Adieu, my brave Englishman! Let's exchange hats once more if you please, in token of love." The dandy guessed at the speech, by the gestures of the speaker, stood up, as erect, as thin, and nearly as tall as a young pine tree, put the Spaniard's hat upon its proper block, ran his scraggy fingers through his own curled locks, which he had disembarrassed of their papillotes, and took a sly self-satisfied peep at a little looking-glass, hanging over the fire-place.

We were all now in motion. The Spaniards went towards the shed, followed by Moinard and the dandy. Mannette carried out a cloak, and one of the packages belonging to the former, and Claude and I stepped on one side to see the departure. No sooner had the party reached the shed than I observed the dandy looking about very inquisitively for his pony. The Spaniards went on with their girthing, strapping and bridling, and Moinard either did not see, or would not notice his searching glances. At length the mules being safely loaded, and the smugglers in the very act of starting, the dandy thought it full time to utter his inquiries and complaints concerning the disappearance of his little nag. He addressed himself to the Spaniards in the best French he could muster, and from his tone I could ascertain clearly, he had a lurking notion that they were concerned in the evasion. "Blood and fury!" exclaimed Manuel, "What does he think, Moinard? Does he suspect us of having packed up his pony in our bales of tobacco?"

"Never mind, never mind," said Moinard, still speaking Spanish, "I'll quiet him. Leave him to me." Then addressing himself to

* *Dicen que ya no me quieres
No me da para maldita,
Que la mancha de la mora
Con otra verde se quita.*

These words have passed into a common proverb in Spain. Senor Manuel's conversation was thickly interlarded with those favorite expletives of his countrymen. I recorded only this one, and have somewhat curtailed his speeches in other respects.

the Englisman in French, "Your horse is safe, Sir, quite safe I'll warrant you."

"Where the devil is he, then?" angrily asked the dandy, "I am determined to have him; and no man stirs from this place, till I am sure of his safety."

With these words he deliberately threw his two long arms out right and left, and with his back towards me, looking altogether like some huge finger-post, he firmly seized the bridles of the two mules, ordering their leaders to stop in a tone of pure aristocratical command.

"Death and fire!" cried Manuel, (for the other Spaniard had not in my hearing spoken a word the whole night)—"I never saw such a phlegmatic fellow! Death and fire! what's all this?" and I observed him instantly draw a knife. His companion did the same. I hurried forwards, alarmed for the safety of my countryman, who seemed quite indifferent to the danger, shook his head only, and swore in plain English, (evidently quite for his own satisfaction) that "he'd be d——d if they stirred one inch till he got back his pony."

Moinard, with his usual steady presence of mind, laid his hand on the dandy's arm, and said to him in a firm voice, "Recollect, Sir, you must not offend these gentlemen. But to make you easy about your horse, you may be sure that no one has it but my daughter Aline, who has taken a loan of it (since the truth must out) to ride across the hill on a visit to a sick lover."

The last word seemed to stick in the speaker's throat, but it quite softened the heart of him to whom it was addressed. "Her lover!" cried he, loosening his hold of the bridles—"God bless the girl, I would have carried her on my own back had not the pony been at hand. She's heartily welcome to it—heartily welcome I assure you—and I beg you will make a thousand apologies to my worthy allies here for my rudeness. But I don't stand trifling, you see."

Moinard performed the task of conciliation full as well as that of explanation; the Spaniards expressed themselves satisfied; and after a few parting shakes of the hand with the dandy and the host, and a kiss each from Mannette, they quickly wound up the hill and were lost to us immediately. Moinard had next to deal with the dandy. He very soon persuaded him to go to bed and recover the broken thread of his repose: with assurances that Aline would be back soon after day-light, to return his pony and prepare his breakfast. His off-hand air of sincerity quite composed the generous and gentle dandy, who without more ado marched, to my great satisfaction, straight forward into his closet.

CHAPTER IV.

As nearly half an hour had elapsed since the departure of Aline, we lost no further time, but stepped forward with a quick pace.—Moinard merely gave a few hints to Mannette for the regulation of small household matters during his absence, and then put his cap on his head, took a staff in his hand, and led the way up towards the mountain side. Claude and I followed close upon his heels, and Ranger on ours. The whole party was fresh and unincumbered, as I had left my knapsack behind, having settled that I was to return to the cottage, whatever might be the result of our adventure.

It was then the month of August; no matter in what year, the night had been misty, which I knew was rather a reason to look for a bright morning. The smooth even path as we went along, and the deep conversation into which we entered, beguiled our route; so that I was somewhat surprised on casting my looks towards the east, as we issued from a ravine about half way up the mountain's side, to find that the dawn was beginning to break. I stopped for a moment to take breath, for the ascent had been very rapid. I gazed around me, and was pleased to see the mists rising gradually upwards, and leaving the bottom of the valleys clear. I distinguished the little river which had narrowed as we mounted towards its source, and the still smaller streamlets that trickled down towards it, like skeins of silvery tissue hanging on the heathy mantle which covered the mountain. A fresh breeze came from the eastward heralding the rising sun, and I marked appearing above the horizon those prelude beams which he sends out, as avant couriers, to clear his path along the ways of heaven. Remembering my disappointment of the preceding morning on the top of the Pic du Midi, I was resolved to be in time at the summit of Arbison, to see the first burst of the day-god as he showed his splendent face to my portion of the world. I gave therefore the hint to my guides, and we pushed quickly on. My companions, though more accustomed to the scene than I was, seemed to participate in my anxiety. We all abandoned for awhile the subject which had lately given such interest to our conversation; and paid, in silence, our homage to the sovereign whose levee we were hurrying to attend. The vapors kept pace with us at first; they mounted beside us for awhile, but soon outstripped our progress; and as they left all clear before us, we saw them blending gradually with the clouds, which had already taken their high stations close to the mountain's summit. As the light increased, a gradual tone and appearance of security seemed to accompany it on the earth. The howling of the wolves, and the barking of the shepherds' dogs, which had kept concert during the night, now gave place to the hum of insects. The eagles, sure of their way, came two or three of them floating down through the air, and seemed to pierce with keen gaze the deepest recesses of the vale.—

The wild flowers opened their bosoms and freely shared their fragrant scents with the breeze, that kissed them as it passed upwards. All nature began to robe itself for the coming ceremony. The grey clouds assumed a variety of tinges of many brilliant colors. The peaks rising here and there above them shone in roseate hues; and the snow heaps that lay on their granite beds were covered with a deep blush of blended crimson and purple. I hurried breathlessly forward, for I feared I should be late. I found that nature was too quick for me. I saw the horizon covered with the yellow streaks, on whose steps the sun treads so quickly. His dazzling beams were fast piercing up the skies, and the west of Heaven was glowing in all the splendid mixture of bright colors which it catches from reflection. I hastened on still faster. I had taken the lead of my companions. I did not look at all before me, until enveloped by thick mists, and losing all sight of the beautiful panorama around me, I found that we were actually in the clouds.

A pang of disappointment was my first sensation, but I did not pause in my career. I heard Claude and Moinard calling to me that I was mounting too high from the path, but I replied that I would soon rejoin them. They paused, and I rushed on. I hoped still to find an opening through the vapors to catch a glimpse of the world below me, blazing in all the splendor of the fully risen luminary.—The mists told me that my hopes were vain, and that the moment was past, for they were all at once illumined with a sudden rush of brightness, that gave to every particle of which they were composed a silver brilliancy, and seemed to throw a glow of warmth into the atmosphere. A few minutes more led me the confines of this bright veil. The pointed peaks of the mountains begun to appear—then the blue heaven above—and in another step or two, I had passed the outward edge of the mist. I looked round, and felt a thrill of awe shoot through me, as I gazed on the solemnity of the scene. As far as the eye could penetrate the apparently boundless extent, a wide ocean of thick clouds alone was visible below me, and the spotless vault of heaven above. Not the slightest sign of earth, or of man, was within view. The heavy mass of congregated vapors, in their millions of involuted folds, brought at once to my mind the notion of the universal deluge, when the world of waters swept majestically along, crushing and burying all trace of animal and vegetable existence. I imagined the last of living victims flying from the coming flood, and hurrying his tottering steps to the summit of the highest hill. I retreated involuntarily upwards—and could have fled in the midst of my abstraction, had not the out-bursting of the glorious sun given a new and splendid character to this most wonderful scene.—He rushed up rapidly from the mass of clouds into the clear blue heaven. He flung no beams round him. Nothing existed as a groundwork to throw them out into shadow, or mark their palpable touch. He was a ball of single and intolerable splendor. My gaze was instantaneous, and had nearly blinded me. I covered my eyes for a moment, and when I looked again the whole ocean of clouds was as a multitude of wreaths of snow, enwrapped one over the other in folds of dazzling whiteness. The scene was too splendid and

too sublime for my continued gaze. I turned in search of relief, and caught, to the southward, the wide extended chain of mountains spreading to the right and left, and lost in the imperfect light of their far distant limits.

Barren and desolate as they looked, there was still something in them which spoke of a nature that was not strange to me. They were palpable realities that recalled me to the world, and brought home to me associations of humanity. I looked on them in all their venerable magnitude of form and extent, enthroned on earth, and covered with the glow of heaven. In all my reverence for their mightiness, I was never so impressed with it as now. I felt them, with their corresponding chains in various parts of the world, superior to all the united wonders of nature; and ran over, in the half hour that I stopped to gaze on them, in this new aspect, the thoughts which at a calmer moment I threw into the following form.—

Ye vast, immeasurable mounds!
 What are your limits, where your bounds?
 Oh! when has laboring nature shown
 Wonders as mighty as your own?
 Which of her works is the compeer
 Of such huge heaps as gather here?
 Alps, Andes, Appenines, proud names,
 What o'er your might precedence claims?
 Does ocean boast its broad expanse?—
 And can the eye within its glance
 Grasp your stupendous magnitude?—
 Its waves with thousand tints imbued?
 And dares the coloring of the sea
 With your wild shades seek rivalry?
 The dreary grandeur that must brave
 The watchful wanderer of the wave?—
 Oh! how insipid to his eyes,
 Who feeds on your varieties,
 Her pigmy undulations rise!
 What splendors do her caverns hold
 Which are not in your caves enrolled?
 What is her widely vaunted store
 To him who would her wilds explore?
 'Tis calm and tempest, wave and sky,
 Sublime but sad monotony.
 But in your realms what richness dwells!
 Pierce Sarancolin's crystal cells—
 Explore each pass—range every vale—
 What magic sweets perfume the gale!
 What colors o'er the hills are shed—
 The varied shades the pine-woods throw
 Upon the rich cascades below—
 Peaks deep empurpled—vales bespread
 With rhododendron's crimson flowers.
 And irises so brightly blue!
 'Twould seem as if Heaven sometimes showers
 A rain of its own azure hue,
 Whose moisture clothes the plants of earth
 With brilliancy of purer birth.

The turbulent ocean leaps and lives
 In pride of its prerogatives.
 Vain pride! as if to it were given
 The power alone to rise tow'nds Heaven.
 When the Creator's loud command
 Bade the wave separate from the land,
 To *that* alone was willed the pride
 Of motion—and to *this* denied!
 Are not the mighty mountains rife
 With germs of undeveloped life,
 Embryo combustions which but lie
 The slumbering lights of destiny?
 Is ancient Idec's fate forgot?—
 Or buried Pleur's more recent lot,
 When Ontario's loosened fragments fell,
 Nor spared a voice the shock to tell,
 But heaped on high its earthy wave
 O'er the crush'd thousands of one grave?
 Go, gaze from Ocean's bounding bed
 On angry Etna's flame-wrapped head;
 Mark while you shrink with shuddering thrill,
 The thick stream course the desolate hill;
 See the devoted hamlets fall,
 As the live lava saps the wall,
 Which yon proud city dared to raise
 A bulwark 'gainst the floating blaze,
 View the pale habitants who sweep
 Like spectres down the glaring steep.
 In vain, in vain—they may not reach
 The frail protection of the beach,
 For see, the frightened waves recoil,
 And shudd'ring shun the blasted soil;
 And on the mountain's gaping side
 Another crater opens wide.—
 Thicker the volumed smoke ascends—
 More fierce the hot stream downward bends—
 In blackened gusts the ashes fly,
 And hide the blaze that lit the sky.
 Darkness is on the world!—Again
 By flames rebursting on the ken
 The gloom is broke. Ye powers on high
 Is the sad scene reality?
 The hill is heaving from its base—
 The tottering mountains change their place—
 The valleys sink—rocks rise around—
 New rivers bursting flood the ground;
 Where are the beauteous hamlets gone?
 Where hundreds stood there is not one.
 Say, what has hushed the shrieking crowd?
 No voice breaks from the horrid shroud
 That wraps in gloom the city's site—
 Oh agony! Oh direful light
 That shows the truth! You hideous blank
 Yawns where engulf'd Catania sank!
 —Is not this motion? Do the waves
 Of that soft sea which lightly laves,
 Or whose worst ire but smooths the sand,
 Bound like these billows of the land?

Yours be the glory then, ye hills,
High as your own huge pinnacles,
To reign supreme, creation's crest,
Magnific monument of rest!
But should your heaven-communing spires
Shake their proud heads—and slumbering fires
Up from your opening wombs be hurled
To wrap the self-consuming world,
Ocean shall then roll pale with dread,
And sink beneath her scorching bed!

While I stood on the topmost pinnacle of the mountain, forgetful of all below me, I heard a shot fired, and prepared to descend; and just as I was about to plunge into the mist, I observed Claude's head appearing through it. He and Moinard, utterly unable to comprehend my proceedings, had begun to be alarmed for my safety or my senses, and I soon understood that their previous speed, which I supposed to arise from sympathy with my sensations, was wholly caused by that connected with poor Aline. The sound of this name, and Claude's tone in pronouncing it, acted like a spell upon my feelings, and I was not free from self-reproach for having abandoned for vague and shadowy abstraction, the more rational subject of human interests and passions. To make amends for my desertion, I redoubled my speed on joining Moinard, who had begun to trudge downwards, trusting to the younger limbs of Claude and myself for his being quickly overtaken. We had still a long walk before us ere we could commence the ascent of the Pic du Midi, the point of rendezvous with Aline. We soon entered deeply again into the heart of our subject. My companions opened their minds as freely as they moved their tongues, and I will take this opportunity of detailing to my readers the whole substance of their disclosures, as well as that of some after conversations with Caribert's mother, Aline, and others of the actors in the story. It is impossible to separate the discourse of one from that of the others, and for the sake of their respective reputations, I shall throw the whole into a narrative form, taking upon myself the responsibility of its veracity and arrangement.

CHAPTER V.

In the whole range of the Pyrenees, from the ocean to the Mediterranean, from Mount Aralar to Mount Carrigon, there were not two finer young fellows in their different natures than Caribert and Claude. They were both born in the district of Barrege. They were the admiration of the neighborhood in infancy, its hope in boyhood, and its pride in youth. When as children they sported about the cottages of their respective parents, or later began to clamber up the mountains in search of young eagles, or in pursuit of a wounded izard, the fathers used to shake their heads and rub their hands together, and the mothers to smile and look up thankfully to heaven,—all four agreeing that there were no lads like them to be seen any where. This was a questionable sort of testimony, no doubt, but it was borne out by the general opinion; and when a few years brought the persons and characters of the two friends into full development, the parental prophecies were amply realized.

Caribert and Claude were sworn friends. They had rendered each other a thousand reciprocal services, and were united by ties of gratitude, unrelaxed by humiliating feelings of benefits received without equivalent. Their pursuits were in most instances as much alike as their means of attaining them were distinct.

They both loved with all their hearts, and followed with all their strength, the exercises suitable to their age. But while Caribert delighted in winning from every competitor the prize of feats of power, Claude's ambition was to carry off the palm in trials of agility and skill. He was the fastest runner and the best leaper between the Gave and the Neste. No one pitched the stone or wrestled so well as Caribert. They both triumphed, and neither felt any jealousy of his friend.

They were hunters by profession, as their fathers had been before them. They were passionately fond of the sport, but they followed it in a different spirit. Claude, with his rifle slung across his shoulder, rarely allowed the rising sun to surprise him in his bed, for at the earliest dawn he was generally far up the mountain following the track of the herds of izards, or cautiously singling out some straggling victim of his almost unerring aim. Caribert was quite as eager in the pursuit of his game, but it was of another kind. He scorned the chase of the timid izard, left almost entirely to his father the care of providing the number necessary for the food of the family, and scarcely condescended to pursue the wolves that fled from his shout in the summer season. In winter, when hunger gave them courage, he would sometimes meet their attack; but the objects of his prowess were in all seasons, at all times of the day or night, the fierce and powerful bears which abounded in his neighborhood. For them he was always ready, with his two favorite dogs at his heels,

his strong gaiters, his leathern doublet, his large clasp-knife, and his trusty pike. Thus equipped he used to accompany his old and hardy father, who inspired him on in boyhood by details of his former feats, and who was happy to see the deeds of his own youth often surpassed by those of his son and the successor to his celebrity.

But the subject on which Claude and Caribert showed at once the greatest sympathy and widest difference—was love. They had both nearly at the same period felt the first-symptoms of attachment to the self-same object. I need not name her, or if I must, to avoid obscurity, to Aline. Claude had first known, and consequently first loved her. He was her near neighbour, and his sisters were her friends. He had scarcely reached manhood when he lost both his parents, and was left the sole protector of three sisters, one older and the others younger than himself. This constant association with females added to the natural tenderness of his character, while the care of a family increased its prudence. A growing passion for such a girl as Aline had alone been wanting to make him one of the steadiest, as he had been before one of the kindest lads in the world.

Caribert seldom or never came down towards the low country.—There was nothing he disliked so much as the level ground; and he was not fond of female society. He had neither sisters nor brothers. He loved his mother well enough, but he doted on his father. The roughness of the old man's character, his desperate and reckless courage, and contempt of all the softer pursuits of life, deeply influenced the congenial mind of Caribert; so much so, that he often reproached his friend Claude with what he called his effeminacy, and resisted for some time his pressing request to submit to an introduction to Aline. After much soliciting, however, he consented, and came across the hill on a fine evening, when the fete day of one of Claude's sisters, was celebrating at his cottage.

A joyous party of the neighbours was assembled, and the dance was proceeding merrily on the grass-plot in front of the cottage, when Caribert made his appearance. Every eye was quickly turned towards him; many a joke, and welcome, and expression of surprise were lavished upon his presence at such a scene. He replied to all with a joyous air, but his whole attention was soon attracted towards one of the dancers, whose manner and appearance struck him as something quite superior to those of many of her prettier companions. Claude saw this with delight, and it was not unobserved, or unrelished by Aline herself, for it was on her that Caribert's eyes were so firmly fixed. She had previously heard a great deal of this redoubtable hunter, and had once had a glimpse of him, as he pursued with one of his companions, a more than commonly ferocious wolf that had ravaged the whole district, for many days, and had finally met its death from this well-nerved arm. Her imagination had been full of the hero, for he was such in his narrow sphere of action, but she had always pictured him as she had seen him in his coarse hunter's costume, his pike in his hand, and his face and person animated with rage. She could scarcely believe it to be the same person who was now pointed out to her, smartly dressed in a Spanish doublet and hose, a blue sash round his waist, and

a bunch of rhododendron blooming gaily in his hat, in honor of his friend's sister, and to fit him for a place at her fete.

Aline listened and sought in vain for a surly tone of voice or a savage look. She heard and saw only lively and gracious words freely given to his acquaintance, and a gaze of admiration and something very like tenderness turned towards her. She possessed as little vanity as almost any of her sex, but she was very highly pleased notwithstanding; and I who have seen her, can well imagine what an animated and graceful expression threw itself insensibly into her looks and attitudes.

When the dance was ended, and its temporary partnerships dissolved, Claude was stepping forward to introduce Caribert to Aline, but he was anticipated in his intention by the quicker movement of the former, who was resolved to do himself that kind office—for he hated ceremony. He accordingly moved towards her, and in his best manner requested she would dance next with him. She consented readily, nay, with pleasure; and that point settled, Caribert turned carelessly round to his friend. Claude was quite gratified at what was passing. He was only astonished how any one could at first sight go so boldly up to one whom he durst scarcely approach after months of intimacy, and he could not help saying to himself, "Ah! if he loved her but ever so little, how he would shrink back when he most wished to be near her."

The mind of Caribert was not of that stamp. It was ardent and impetuous. It followed its object ever at full speed, and knew none of those tardy and hesitating movements, which distinguished that of Claude. This meeting with Aline was an era in his life, and his whole bearing bore instant evidence of the importance of the event. When the dance recommenced, he led his partner forth with a feeling of confidence and triumph. His whole frame was animated, and his look and manner in unison. He danced and talked with a vivacity which astonished Aline the more, as his energy had nothing whatever of violence in it. In one of the pauses, she expressed her surprise that so proverbial a despiser of the amusement should appear to enjoy the dance as he did.

"Why," said he, "I don't forget what I learnt and loved when a child; and never since then have I felt as I do this evening. My nature seems quite changed—turned back into those times of happiness."

The look which accompanied this speech made Aline blush to the eyes, and cause her heart to flutter. "O! I meant!" replied she, "that I did not expect to find a bear hunter so good a dancer, that's all." "Why so?" returned he; "even the bears under this rough hand of mine could learn to dance; and surely I should be worse than the brutes if I could not do as much, when guided by yours."

He here took her hand in his; and though I by no means imply that Aline's could bear any comparison with those delicate members of the many fair readers who will yet, I trust, turn over this page, I have no doubt whatever but it acknowledged the pressure of the ardent Caribert's just in the proper proportion of mountain sentiment, acting upon manual feeling.

It is not necessary that I should record any further specimens of the conversation of the—lovers, for so I must plainly call them.—They were so to all intents, ay, and purposes. The labors of united years could not unravel the web that entwined itself round their hearts in the course of that short evening. Caribert felt as if born anew. He seemed to have found in one moment of mere chance what had been wanting to him all his life, and a sudden conviction appeared to tell him that his whole life was from that moment engaged and devoted to her.

She on her part could scarcely fathom the depth of her feelings, they were so totally new, so mixed, and so astonishing. She did not know what to make of either Caribert or herself. He was so very, very unlike what she expected; and she so utterly changed from what she had been. She had never cared much for dancing, beyond the pleasure of seeing her friends—now she felt as if she could go on trippingly for ever, and was quite disappointed and unhappy when the music ceased. She was no great talker in general, and used to listen with but little interest to the common topics of her rustic friends; yet she now seemed to have acquired the faculty and the desire of perpetual speech, and she devoured every word uttered by Caribert, although on summing up what he said, she actually found it to relate to nothing more than the commonest matter connected with their respective ways of life. She thought all this very wonderful, and so it was, in fact,—wonderful, although of every day occurrence; and defying solution, although there are few of my readers, I am sure, (at least I hope so for their sakes,) who have not once in their lives had experience of it all.

When the gaieties of the evening were fairly over, and the stars just beginning to open *their* dance in the heavens, the party broke up, and the guests took each their separate ways, up hill and down dale, towards their homely beds. I like to picture to my imagination the different groups as they moved across the mountains, the youths in their graceful costumes, the girls half covered by the scarlet hoods, called capulets, universally worn in those parts, and amazingly picturesque at a little distance, when contrasted with the bright green colors of the mountain, or the rich hue of the flowers scattered in broad patches on the grass. Both Claude and Caribert formed Aline's escort to her home. They had a league to walk, and it was very quickly completed. There was a great deal of conversation on the way, but it was entirely between Caribert and Aline. They both talked fluently, and thus seemed almost to forget the presence of Claude, who had no wish to take part in the discourse, being quite satisfied to feel Aline's arm on his, and quite happy to see a new proof of her power, as exemplified in Caribert's loquacity.

Old Moinard and little Mannette met them at the door. The former welcomed Claude warmly, and received his friend rather ceremoniously. He had a penetrating eye and a calculating head, and as my readers may recollect from the hints of Senor Manuel, was a man of a worldly and money-making turn. He saw with one glance that Caribert might become the rival of Claude. He had heard a

great deal of him, and knew him a little, and putting together what folks said, and what he saw, he was quite convinced that such a one would stand a thousand chances to one, in a contest with Claude, for the affections of a girl of Aline's disposition. He disliked, moreover, the character of Caribert's father, particularly that portion of his reputation which stamped him as a very poor man, who had ever enough to do to make both ends meet through life, and who never knew anything of comfort, unless eating venison three or four times a week from necessity, not choice, might be reckoned as such. Claude, on the other hand, was the proprietor, jointly with his sisters, of a very nice spot of ground, and a comfortable cottage, and likely from his steady habits to do well in the world. He had Moinard's best wishes in his suit to Aline, and it was therefore that Caribert failed to share in the warm reception he now met with.

Aline saw, or she thought she saw, into her father's thoughts. She felt as if she had done something wrong, she could not tell why or wherefore, and did not venture to invite Caribert into the house. Moinard was determined to cut the visit short, before he got across the threshold.

"Thank ye, my lads, both, for the care of my girl. You have a smart walk home, and the night looks rather gloomy. I'll not pay you a bad compliment by asking you to stay longer. Good night! We shall see you to-morrow, Claude. You know Aline won't excuse a day's absence. I should be very happy, Monsieur Caribert, should you look in on us now and then when you are passing: if indeed, you will deign to have an acquaintance who lives lower down than five thousand feet above the level of the sea. Good night, my lads,—no compliments—come, girls, to bed, to bed."

With these words, and a multitude of salutations, he retired into the cottage. Claude was accustomed to the ways of his anticipated father-in-law, and did not see anything extraordinary in all this. As to Caribert, he was insensible to the coldness and sarcasm of Moinard's manner; it was enough for him that he was invited to the house by the highest authority; he was disposed to consider every thing and everybody warm and cordial, and he was quite resolved to give a speedy proof of his condescension.

On their way back to Claude's cottage, the friends seemed to have completely changed characters. Claude talked without a moment's cessation, so that one might have almost thought, he had also changed his sex, (craving the sex's pardon) had not a woman been the sole subject of his chatter. He had always been fluent with Caribert in his praises of Aline, but he now exceeded all his former loquacity. He ran on in her praise, ringing every possible change into which it could be turned, and appealing at every moment to his companion for a confirmation of his eulogiums. But he found no reply in the voice of Caribert, although every encomium was deeply echoed in his heart. Claude had it all to himself as far as talking went, while Caribert enjoyed in his own way, in secrecy and silence, a full participation in all the pleasures of his friend. They parted at the little path which turned off close by Claude's cottage, and Caribert pursued his road up the mountain towards his own residence, to prepare,

as he told his friend on parting, for a chase in the distant gorge of Gavarnie, which was fixed for the following morning.

How the different parties passed this night it is hard precisely to say. Mannette declared that Aline disturbed her from laying down to getting up, heaving heavy sighs and muttering broken scraps of sentences in her sleep, which could scarcely be called sleep; and yet, that her countenance wore notwithstanding, a constant smile from the time she was able to see it, when the dawn first peeped in at the lattice window. It was remarked by Claude's sisters, that he arose the morning after the fete with an air of freshness and triumph much unlike his usual timid and modest manner. He seemed proud of having gained a victory over the obstinacy of Caribert, and happy in having made him sensible of what a treasure he was in hopes of one day possessing. We may guess how Caribert's hours were employed, for soon after daybreak he was the first object seen by Claude, as the latter turned out upon the heath equipped for his morning sport.

"Why, Caribert," cried Claude, "you can scarcely have been in bed, if you have walked home and back since we parted last night. Where are you bound to? This is not the road to Gavarnie."

"No, Claude, I have not been in bed. The fact is, that I loitered about the mountain thinking of one thing and another,—I scarcely know what, until the dawn was almost appearing; and when I reached home at last, I found my father quite restless and uneasy at my absence, and beginning to get ready for the chase, so I did not think it worth while to lie down and keep him waiting. That's the truth."

"But you did not accompany him, it seems. How's that?"

"Faith, I scarcely know how. But I was disinclined to go. I believe the fact is that the dancing tired me last night."

"The devil it did! you didn't come down the hill just now like a tired man, for all that. What excuse did you make to your father?"

"Why to tell you the truth, Claude, I was obliged to invent a little bit of a lie. I told him I had a head ache—and in fact I have not been quite well," added Caribert, putting his hand to his side, and drawing a long sigh.

"I am sorry for that, though, replied Claude, "will you step in and take something? The girls are all up. I have just had a cup of chocolate—real Bayonne, that was given us by Monsieur Moinard. Come and have a cup—it will refresh you."

"No, thank you, let's walk about a little. I like the sharp morning air."

"Well then, come up the mountain with me. I am going after the eight izaras that we saw grazing on Pic Arbizon last night, and looking down on us so saucily, while we were dancing. Its all in your way—its up hill. I know you're not fond of the low grounds."

"Why no, not this morning, thank ye."

"What the deuce will you do then? What in the name of the Virgin brought you down this way?" asked Claude, smiling.

"Why you see, Claude, I thought it would be only civil to step over and ask your sisters how they were after the dance. One must be civil, you know, to the girls?"

"What, you've found out that at last, Caribert, have you? Come, that's good. Mount Perdu may move at last to Bagnères, in spite of the proverb. Miracles will never cease, that's certain." And here Claude indulged himself in a hearty laugh.

"The truth is, my dear Claude, your sisters were very kind to me last night, and I don't like to seem insensible, and I don't know how it was, but Jeanneton looked prettier than usual. She is the youngest, is'nt she?"

"No, to be sure not. Aimee is twenty-two months her junior."

"Well, one would not have thought it. I'll step in and see the girls, Claude, if you go on after the enemy."

At these words a light seemed to break in all at once on Claude's perception; and it was accompanied by a warm ray of pleasure. It seemed as if the thing he most wished for on earth (except one) was coming about, an attachment between his friend and his sister. Every thing appeared clear to him. He now easily accounted for Caribert's attention to Aline, and his not having spoken six words to Jeanneton the whole preceeding evening. "He loves little Jeanneton just as I do Aline—he durst not speak to her—that's the whole secret," said Claude to himself, as he shook Caribert's hand heartily, and wished him good morning. Caribert saw with the keen eye of a lover, what was so legible on his friend's fine, open, honest countenance. He could not undeceive him just then, nor yet reconcile himself to the double part he was playing, as it were, in spite of his conscience; but after loitering about for a few minutes as Claude walked quickly on, he at last called after him, "I say, Claude, just stop a minute—I say, what do you think? would'nt it be but right—that is might it not look uncivil, or—not downright uncivil, but inattentive, not just to step over and ask Monsieur Moinard how he does? You know he asked us last night; you remember that, don't you? You heard him?"

"Oh, it is not at all necessary, my good fellow," replied Claude; "I don't stand on ceremony there. I am quite at home with the family. Besides I know that Monsieur Moinard is gone out to Sarancolin this morning.

"Is he?" exclaimed Caribert, briskly; and then added involuntarily, but in an under voice, "thank God!"

"What do you say?" asked Claude.

"Say! Oh! nothing, but that it is rather unfortunate.—But Claude, you wouldn't step over to inquire after Mademoiselle Aline? Do you know I think she coughed a little last night on her way home: and she expects you to-day, remember—her father said that. You remarked that, didn't you?"

"Oh, that was nothing; at all events she does not expect me at five o'clock in the morning. Besides, I'll call as I go round the hill on my return home, and hope to leave an izard there in the place of that packet of chocolate, do you see; and as to Aline's having a little cough, why you don't think she minds such a thing as that? You take her for something wonderfully delicate."

"Oh, not at all. It was entirely on your account I mentioned it; because, you know, I should not like you to seem inattentive to your mistress."

"My dear friend!" exclaimed Claude, giving Caribert's hand a squeeze, which seemed to shoot to his heart like a dagger's point. "But to tell you the honest truth," added Claude, "I never go near Aline when her father is out of the way. I am somehow awkward and uneasy at the thoughts of being alone with her."

"Well, never mind that," said Caribert, a new hope overpowering his passing feelings of self-reproach; "I don't care if I go down with you myself—sooner than you should seem wanting in civility."

"No, no," replied Claude, "I'll be hanged if you shall outdo me in generosity. No, go in and see little Jeanneton, that will do better. I am sure, into the bargain, that Moinard will be back by nine o'clock, for he expects a convoy of tobacco from Jaca at that hour."

"Does he, indeed, so soon?"

"Why, did you know any thing of it?"

"Oh, not a word, but—you see it is entirely on your account—I am anxious that you shouldn't be late in your visit—you have no time to lose, for those eight houncers may lead you a long chase. So good bye, Claude, we may meet again to-day.—Good bye."

"Adieu, my dear fellow, adieu! success and good speed!" were the parting words of Claude; and Caribert having gazed after him for a moment, turned his steps towards the cottage.

After a short time passed in the ceremonies of a formal visit, to which the embarrassment of Caribert and the astonishment of the three sisters added more than a common awkwardness, he rose to take leave; and having professed a change of his original plan, and an intention of rejoining Claude on the hills, he took his leave. He lounged slowly up the mountain as long as he thought there was any chance of observation from the cottage, and then returning round a projecting angle of rock, he struck off at his quickest pace straight towards the north, in the direction of Moinard's residence. His mind was full of Aline, and as he argued by an analogy very common, I believe, with lovers of his temperament, he could not help believing she was thinking of him. Now without pushing too far the theory of secret sympathies, I hope I am not out of nature in saying, that Aline reckoned it an almost moral certainty, that Caribert would pay her a visit that morning. He did not say a word of the kind the evening before. But whatever was the cause of the feeling, obvious or occult, so it was that Aline was loitering about the skirts of a patch of pine-wood, at some distance from the house, and on an eminence that commanded a full view of the only way by which Caribert was at all likely to approach. She had not been long thus stationed, when the figure of a man, approaching rapidly, caught her eye. She started, and looked again—it might be Claude. But no, the blue sash of the evening before, the stature shorter than his, the bearing loftier, and the step more firm, left no doubt on her mind as to the identity, even before the subdued beam of the naturally fiery eye was quite apparent, as Caribert took off his cap, and made his respectful yet animated salutation.

CHAPTER VI.

I must leave to the imagination of my readers the particulars of the stolen interview which concluded the last chapter. I had no means of coming at them accurately, and should have spoiled the recital by a pretended description of what may be easily fancied, and at best but difficultly detailed. The lovers had to sustain a severe contest of conflicting sentiments; but these were evidently increased, as the full embarrassment of their situation ripened during the four months that followed their eventful meeting at Claude's cottage.

Aline gave the reins to her strong attachment with a clear conscience, for its progress was not attended with one act or thought that could be construed into a reproach. Caribert was the most respectful though the most passionate of lovers. He prized her modesty while he almost worshipped her mind, and he felt that, in her influence over him, at least, she was as far superior to her station and her associates, as he knew himself to be above his. I am not, in recording this, at all desirous of making my readers forget the rank in life, of this couple, or of throwing any mystifying exaggerations over their character and manners. I am merely judging them and painting them as they knew themselves—in comparison with their fellows.

But added to the strength of Aline's understanding, which told her she had no reproaches to make herself, she had also a very feeling heart, which was continually whispering her that she was about to cause much unhappiness to others. Claude had never said that he loved her; that is, he had never said so in the vulgar tongue; but he was everlastingly declaring his passion in that natural and voiceless language whose idioms are of all others the easiest to comprehend, for they are suited alike to the apprehensions of the prince and peasant. She was perfectly aware of the state of his heart, and of the suffering he was preparing for himself. She wished to check this, but to do so effectually, she must have betrayed her attachment to his friend; and the price she was forced to pay for its indulgence was her sympathy with the anticipated sufferings of Claude. Then she was contravening the avowed wishes of her father, and obliged to conceal her own under an appearance of contentment which it was almost intolerable to assume, for she was the most uneasy of mortals, except in her stolen meetings with Caribert, and even then any thing but free from anxiety.

But if she had her cares, and it will be admitted that she had, those of Caribert were a thousand times more poignant, for they were founded on the conviction of his hypocrisy and injustice to more than one individual. To attain his purpose of being frequently in the presence of Aline, and almost always near her, he was forced to put on the treacherous semblance of another attachment, not only to the guileless Claude, but to the innocent Jeanneton its pretended object. By such a pretence

alone he was able to account to the former for his daily visits to the cottage, and his nightly lingerings with the circle of its unsuspecting tenants. It was very rarely that he could, by the greatest stretch of ingenuity, snatch a stolen visit to the clump of pine trees during the day time; for to make it safe, a concurrence of lucky circumstances was necessary: the absence of Moinard in one direction, that of Claude in another, and the uninterrupted occupation of the three sisters within the house. It would be endless to enumerate the difficulties in the way of this coincidence. In wet weather Moinard was generally at home. When it was fair, either Jeanneton or her sisters were sure to be employed on the hills attending the little flock of sheep or goats, knitting or in some other out-of-door work; while the path down to the place of rendezvous, and even that spot itself, were quite visible from an hundred paces beyond the cottage. Often too, when all circumstances up the hill favored his views, and Caribert, after many manoeuvres to ensure them, moved downwards, breathless with expectation, and with a thousand tender and animated feelings ready to pour out in a flood of natural eloquence into the ear of her who was their inspiration, he has reached the grove, where he pictured her anxiously awaiting his arrival, and found a chill and comfortless blank in the place where she ought to have been. Many embarrassing obstacles have on these occasions kept her at home; but it was not within the range of Caribert's mind, to seek for relief in such disappointments, by picturing hers, and sympathising with them, rather than brooding over his own. Every check of this kind turned inwards upon him, and acting on an irritable temper and nervous constitution, made him dissatisfied and angry with all the world, not excepting himself, and even her! The fit once over, he execrated his violence of feeling, and found in its examination another subject of self-reproach. Then, after a long and fruitless watch, he wound his way wearily up towards home; where he met with a mixture of harsh reproof from his father, vexed at his frequent absences, and a teasing display of affection from his mother, which was not a bit more soothing.

He made several visits to Moinard's cottage, accompanied by Claude, who let the old man into the unreal secret of Caribert's affection for Jeanneton, and thus quieted all his alarms. He was quite deceived by the circum-spect air of the actual lovers—but there was nothing in these snatches of happiness that satisfied the impetuous soul of Caribert, thirsting for a long draught of undisturbed and secret joy. Alone with Claude he was on thorns. He could speak of Aline for ever—of her never. Her name seem buried in the deep recesses of his breast; and the bubbling praises of his friend were only torments to him, as so far short of what he felt, but could not utter.

It was thus that night only was suited to his purpose, and scarcely one passed over him without a stolen hour or hurried moment, as circumstances stood his friend. The arrival of the Spanish smugglers, and the sound sleep of Moinard, permitted Aline on most occasions to quit the house; and if the weather, or matters within were such as to prevent her reaching the pine grove, Caribert was sure to come down in spite of her remonstrances, often as far as the cattle sheds, to snatch one short embrace, one low muttered 'good night,' or 'God bless you,' and

think himself well paid for his time and his temerity. But, although his frame was as robust as his mind was ardent, this continued and unsparring exposure to the night air in all weather, and in the winter season, began to make visible ravages upon him. The snow now lay thick upon the mountain tops, the chill airs swept incessantly across them, and heavy mists settled early in the evening along the whole chain of hills. The fevered state of Caribert's mind was in unison with his physical temperament. Little or no repose, poor nourishment, continual damp and cold, brought on frequent attacks of illness that he despised too much to attend to. All the habits of his life were changed. For many weeks he had never taken his pike-staff in his hand, or followed the chase. The violent exercise to which his former pursuits had forced him, was ill replaced by his walks down the mountain, and the chill and shivering delays which were often the fruit of his exertions. Everything seemed going wrong with both his mind and body. The harassing energies of the first fell with dreadful weight upon the latter; and this in its turn seemed to throw the whole burthen of its evils upon the brain; for rheumatism, rheuma, and such common consequences, of a life like Caribert's seemed repulsed from his constitution, by some powerful amulet, that it might have puzzled even the doctors to analyze.

He made light of physical pain; but moral suffering began to bow him down. His hunter companions looked on him coldly. They never loved him, for he plainly felt them to be his inferiors. His only claim on their regard, intrepid daring, was now no longer evident. He seemed to shrink from their bold pursuits. The wolves pressed on towards the flocks and the cottages, urged by the early approach of winter; the bears growled fiercely round the hamlets; but Caribert was no longer sensible to their spirit-stirring notes of defiance. Reproaches and sarcastic hints met him at every turn. He bit his lips, and his distempered spirit fed fiercely on such nourishment. He had a thousand times resolved to open his mind to Claude, to undeceive Jeanneton, and boldly demand the hand of Aline from her father. But when he reflected on the web of many falsehoods in which he was entangled, his proud mind could not brook the humiliation, and he went on in his career in that wild and uncalculating way so common to tempers like his, and so much the more uncontrollable, from the strong contrast it presented to his former reserved and isolated existence. The eternal attentions of his mother, the condolences of Claude, the open hearted sorrow of Jeanneton, and the sympathy of her sisters, did nothing for the improvement of the state of health which they one and all deplored—Aline, the most interested of all, knew nothing of her lover's illness. However he might suffer when away from her—however his gnawing remorse might fly upwards, when Jeanneton smiled sweetly and innocently on him, or Claude opened his secrets to him with a brother's freedom—in the presence of his heart's idol he knew no ailment. His nerves were free, his spirit seemed at large, and the stream of his impassioned language in those moments of hope and happiness showed nothing of the bitterness of the source from which it flowed. He saw her latterly entirely at night. The pale reflection of a wintry moonbeam thrown back from a bed of snow, was calculated to display unfavorably his cheeks, which

This one glance was enough. It was like the movement of some mental spring that opened at once before the brain the whole pageant which had been so long concealed from view ; a pageant of past scenes and hideous transformation—fond hopes, now withered—fair prospects, desolate—a trusted friend, deceitful ! All this, and much more of pain and bitterness seemed at once to burst on Claude. He turned aside into the pine-grove, clasped his hands, and leaned his back against a tree, looking after Caribert with a fixed and fascinated gaze. Thus placed, what varieties of thoughts must he have had ! What a revival of every scene or word that had passed or been uttered for months ! What a minute recollection of thousands of little circumstances, and hints, and looks, that had been unheeded while they went by, but which now spoke too plainly ! But passing over conjectures as to the emotions which rushed confusedly upon him—these rapid sensations of anguish,

Which ten times faster glide than the sun-beams,
Driving back shadows over low'ring hills—

we must suppose him to have reached his home ; ever till this hour the home of peace and hope.

Here he had a most difficult and painful character to support. His presence had always been the greatest source of comfort to his sisters ; he was so frank, so amiable, so communicative. Whenever he came in, they were sure to have a lively and pleasant detail of his day's adventures, his visit to Aline, his meeting with Caribert, or something or other connected with these two objects of his affections and friendship. Any thing like violent feeling, or above all, like concealment, was so foreign to him, that on the present occasion he found himself beyond all things embarrassed. He was a novice in deceit, but he did all he could to fill the part, and he was ill and fatigued, and turned off more particular remarks upon his silence and agitation, how and with what success he could.

Caribert had in the meantime arrived at his father's door, and he never approached it in a state of greater discontent and irritation. He was quite prepared for any event which might rouse the mind, or wound the feelings. The scene which presented itself as he entered the house, was perfectly calculated to effect the double consummation.

Close to the door lay his father's leathern doublet, and his woollen jacket, the latter stained with blood, partially torn, and bearing marks of earth, as if the wearer had fallen after a struggle. A short hunting-pike broken across was beside it, and as Caribert turned his quick glance in search of the owner of these relics of a contest or an accident, he saw him sitting on a chair by the window, one arm bared to the shoulder, lacerated and bleeding, while with the other the old man was caressing one of the shaggy dogs, which lay helpless on a stool beside him, piteously moaning, and looking up with tearful eyes. The old woman was just beginning to bind up her husband's wounds, with bands of linen, steeped in some homely preparation, when Caribert rushed forward, shocked, and with a startling abruptness.

" My God ! what is all this ? " exclaimed he, taking his father's hand in his— " What has happened ? Who has done this ? "

were wan and hollow. But his bright eye, his fluent speech, and animated accents, gave the lie to apprehensions of his altered state and parried her remarks on that visible thinness which could not be concealed, by affectionate and arch reproaches on the encouragement she gave to a passion, which he told her never made men fat.

But once out of her sight he had no shadow of gaiety reflected from the sombre ground of his thoughts and feelings. He left her often with a light and buoyant forgetfulness of all but her; but as soon as he had watched her to the house, and heard the door close as she entered, the spell seemed dissolved, and he trudged, homewards with a heavy heart, and bursting need.

The day at last approached which was fixed on by destiny to terminate this state of suffering. The month of March had arrived; and though spring had already begun to wave his light wings, in the genial warmth of the valleys, winter still maintained possession of the mountains. One morning, when old Larcole, Caribert's father, had ineffectually tried to persuade his son to accompany him to the chase, the latter set out to pay his accustomed visit to Claude's cottage; and, after seeing that all was right there, the sisters being employed within, and Claude gone out to shoot, he proceeded to the pine-grove and was disappointed by not finding Aline, as she had promised. He was met by Mannette who acted the part of a very faithful confidant, and occasional scout and messenger. She was proud of being in the secret, of, she knew not exactly what, between Aline and her lover, and she the more readily obeyed their injunctions of secrecy as to their meetings, from the circumstance of Caribert's constant good nature towards her. He had made her several presents, never came openly to the cottage, without bringing her a large bouquet of rhododendron, wild roses, or odorous myrtle, and had completely won her heart by a gift of the eagle, by which my readers will recollect I was saluted on my first visit to the cottage, as well as the izard, which had grown to be so tame and tractable in a couple of years. The business of Mannette's meeting with Caribert was to give him the unpleasant intelligence, that Claude was at that moment in the house with Aline, having come round the mountain to deposit a portion of his morning's spoils. Caribert had no sooner heard this news than he quitted the grove; desiring Mannette to assure her sister he would be there at night fall, and hurried fast towards home, cursing his ill luck, and the double duplicity which forced him to fly the presence of one whom he knew himself to have deceived.

In this mood he sped along his path, but not undiscovered: Claude during his visit at Moinard's, perceived a confused hesitation in Aline's manner, which he was strangely puzzled to account for; nor did the appearance of Mannette, who kept her secret better than her countenance, tend to remove his astonishment. When he rose to take his leave, Aline, for the first time in her life, pressed a continuance of his visit; but the invitation sounded so oddly and so awkwardly, that he found it the most embarrassing point of all, and after a few minutes hesitation he quitted the house. He soon reached the pine-grove, passed it, and as it ceased to impede his view of the naked hill, the first object which caught his eye was Caribert, moving rapidly on, not in the direction of Claude's cottage, but more to the right towards his own.

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Driving back shadows over low'ring hills—

we must suppose him to have reached his home; ever till this hour the home of peace and hope.

Here he had a most difficult and painful character to support. His presence had always been the greatest source of comfort to his sisters; he was so frank, so amiable, so communicative. Whenever he came in, they were sure to have a lively and pleasant detail of his day's adventures, his visit to Aline, his meeting with Caribert, or something or other connected with these two objects of his affections and friendship. Any thing like violent feeling, or above all, like concealment, was so foreign to him, that on the present occasion he found himself beyond all things embarrassed. He was a novice in deceit, but he did all he could to fill the part, said he was ill and fatigued, and turned off more particular remarks upon his silence and agitation, low and with what success he could.

Caribert had in the meantime arrived at his father's door, and he never approached it in a state of greater discontent and irritation. He was quite prepared for any event which might rouse the mind, or wound the feelings. The scene which presented itself as he entered the house, was perfectly calculated to effect the double consummation.

Close to the door lay his father's leathern doublet, and his woollen jacket, the latter stained with blood, partially torn, and bearing marks of earth, as if the wearer had fallen after a struggle. A short hunting-pike broken across was beside it, and as Caribert turned his quick glance in search of the owner of these relics of a contest or an accident, he saw him sitting on a chair by the window, one arm bared to the shoulder, lacerated and bleeding, while with the other the old man was caressing one of the shaggy dogs, which lay helpless on a stool beside him, piteously moaning, and looking up with tearful eyes. The old woman was just beginning to bind up her husband's wounds, with bands of linen, steeped in some homely preparation, when Caribert rushed forward, shocked, and with a startling abruptness.

"My God! what is all this?" exclaimed he, taking his father's hand in his—"What has happened? Who has done this?"

"Jeanneton!" echoed Caribert in a half-whisper, a contemptuous smile on his lip, and with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Right my, my boy," exclaimed the delighted father, slapping him on the back, "I knew you'd get over that stumbling block when the spar stuck in the right place. Yes, I always said so to your mother——didn't I Maria? Why, the loss of a dog, and a scratch on my arm, is poor payment for the pleasure this gives me. Ay, ay, Caribert, we'll punish that ruffian to-morrow, and hunt many a long day together yet. Time enough for courting and fooling twenty years hence. No way that to spend the prime of life. I was close to forty when I first saw your mother, and the whole business was begun and ended in a fortnight. Wasn't Marie?"

The reply was stifled by the loud and melancholy moaning of the wounded animal; when the old man exclaimed, "By heavens, I can stand this no longer! my poor bitch, you shall not ask for relief in vain. Lift her up gently, Caribert, and take her out to the garden. Wrap something round her. There, take that old jacket, that will do. Many a fine fellow lies in these hills in a shabbier winding-sheet."

Caribert proceeded to perform these sad duties, and his father took down his short-barrelled gun that hung on two pegs over the fire-place. This was the time for the kind nature of the wife to take a prominent part. She saw the purposes of these preparations, and interposed with sobs and sighs, and entreaties that it might at least be deferred. But all this was ineffectual. Both father and son saw the necessity of the thing; and they quickly overpowered her resistance, by pointing out the cruelty of protracting a suffering for which there was but one cure. The poor woman submitted at last. She cried like a child as she saw Caribert fold the old flannel jacket round the animal, lift her up in his arms, and go out of the cottage. She next observed the father, who, having put an additional bullet into his gun, and examined the flint and the priming, soon followed; and at this near approaching of the tragedy she sat down upon the side of the bed, laid her head on the bolster, and put both her hands to her ears, that she might not hear the sound of the death-shot.

The mournful executioners passed quickly into the little garden, and Caribert, walking up to the farthest end, placed his burthen on the bank, which in the summer was thickly studded with the small wild strawberry of the Upper Pyrenees, but was now covered with snow. While Franchette was in his arms she uttered not a moan, and looked almost contented, and Caribert thought for an instant that she could even sigh out her sufferings without pain on such a pillow. But, when he put her down, she gave one, and but one, heart-piercing yell. Caribert's eyes swam anew with tears, and he saw nothing more. The old man approached—"Now then, Caribert," said he, "stand aside. Let me get close to her."

Caribert stepped away a pace or two, and put his hand before his eyes. He expected every instant to hear the fatal report, and felt his eyelids, his teeth, and his hands close more firmly together, as the delay of each second seemed to compress and wind up all his

nerves. He at length opened his eyes, and looked under his hand; and instead of seeing his father, as he expected, with the muzzle close to the heart of the bitch, and his finger on the trigger, he perceived him, with his back turned towards her, the gun loosely hanging in one hand, and the other holding his handkerchief to his face.

"Why father, father, exclaimed Caribert, "for Heaven's sake what's this? Won't you put the poor thing out of pain?"

"I'll tell you what, Caribert, it's more than I'm man for, I cannot do it," was his reply.

"Give me the gun, then; this is child's play, indeed!" said Caribert. But on taking it from his father, and advancing close to the bank, he saw poor Franchette silently and stiffly lying where he had placed her, her eyes turned up and her mouth open, her tongue hanging out, and a little stream of black blood trickling over it upon the snow.

"Why, father," cried he, starting back, "she's dead! stone dead, by Heavens!"

"Dead!" said the father, "what do you mean?" and then stepping towards her, and seeing her to be really, unequivocally dead, he added, "She is, by the Virgin! When the monster caught her in his gripe, he must have not only broken her legs, but her faithful heart as well!"

Certain that some internal hurt had saved them the painful task they had contemplated, they rejoiced at the weakness which had caused their hesitation. Caribert felt that his resentment was doubly excited against the bear, by the fact of his having caused her actual death; and the old man was happy that his poor wife would be spared the reflection of her being sacrificed by his hand. While Caribert dug a hole in which to lay the body, his father went in to summon his Marie to attend the funeral ceremony. He found her lying as he left her, and when he saw him enter, she rose and exclaimed,

"Why, Larcole, is it all over? is the poor thing murdered—dead I mean? I heard no shot."

"Because none was fired. She is dead, Marie, and not murdered, thank God! Come out and see her laid in her cold grave!"

The old couple went out, and while Caribert placed the stiff body in the pit he had dug, Larcole flung in several shovel-fuls of snow, exclaiming—"Well, my poor faithful bitch, there's a bright pure shroud for you at any rate. When the snow melts, and the wild strawberries bloom over your grave, I may not be above ground myself, perhaps! But no matter, your mistress here and Caribert will heave a sigh for you, and—Come, come, Caribert; what are you wiping your eyes for? Cover in the earth and let's go and have some dinner. There now, that's very well, nothing can be better. Come along."

They all went in accordingly; but not a spoonful of the venison soup, nor a bit of bouilli, was tasted that day.

An hour or two after the dinner time was occupied in the preparation for the next morning's work. The old man to make ready a new handle for his piko, and Caribert had to look over and arrange all his hunt-

ing accoutrements. As he laid them one by one on his bed, the touch of every separate article, and the observation of their marks of service, gave fresh impulse to his determination, sorrow for his buried favorite falling upon each new incitement like oil on wreaths of fire.

When all was ready, and the shades of evening sweeping fast over the western mountains, he begged of his father to lie down and repose till dawn. The old man did so willingly, for he was grieved and fatigued; and, though he said little about it, it was evident to his watchful helpmate that he suffered considerable pain from his inflamed and excoriated arm. While she applied fermentations to it of the simple remedy which, although it had been applied ineffectually to poor Franchette, was really most efficacious, Caribert took his cup and walking stick, and said he would just step down to Claude's to tell them not to expect him in the morning, according to his promise.

Old Larcole was lying on his back in bed, the wounded arm outside, receiving the cares of his wife, his eyes closed, half from sleep and as much from pain, when he heard Caribert announce his departure. He started up suddenly, and leaning with his arms on the side of the bed he looked sternly at him and exclaimed: "Take care, Caribert; something tells me you are going to abandon me to-morrow."

"For God's love, father," replied the son, "how can you say so! I swear to you that nothing on earth shall keep me from you. I will be back by midnight at latest, as sure as the stars are in heaven!"

His energy satisfied the old man, who answered, "Remember the oath, my boy, and I am content. I will expect you. But by all that you have sworn to, and by heaven itself into the bargain, if you are not here at dawn of day, I will go myself, disabled as I am, and kill or be killed or die in the attempt! Go now to your sweetheart, and remember your oath," added he, sinking back, and shutting his eyes again.

"Never fear, father, never fear," said Caribert, closing the door after him.

CHAPTER VII.

While all this was passing, Claude had been holding a long parley with his first impressions on the subject of Caribert's treachery. The natural tenor of his feelings was benevolent and generous; and after some hours of miserable certainty, he began to enjoy the imperfect satisfaction of doubt. He thought he might have been too hasty; that even if Caribert had been clandestinely visiting Aline, it might have been on some secret affair, of which he should know the whole in good time; something perhaps concerning her father, "or even," thought he, "some project connected with my happiness! Good God! if such should turn out to be the case!"

Just as he had inwardly uttered this exclamation, the door opened, and Caribert entered the cottage. The blood flow into Claude's

cheeks, but he mechanically stretched out his hand to his visitor, who took it without observing his countenance, in the dusk of his chamber.

"Ah! you are most welcome this evening, Caribert, we never wanted you more," said Jeanneton; "here's poor Claude quite gloomy and sad, we don't know what to make of him."

"So much the worse," replied Caribert. "for I am in no mood to make him merry, I assure you."

"Why, has any thing happened to you?" asked Claude.

"Not exactly to me—but there's my father wounded by a bear, and Franchette killed, that's something, is'nt it?"

Exclamations of surprise and sorrow burst from the listening group, and the three sisters offered with one voice to go off immediately to assist his mother in her nursing.

"When did this happen?" asked one of the sisters.

"When I was making a fool of myself here this morning."

"Making a fool of yourself, Caribert?" said Jeanneton, her eyes filling with tears.

"It's well," muttered Claude, "if you have not been making fools of other people."

"I wish we had known of this misfortune before," exclaimed the eldest sister; "you may be sure, Caribert, we should'nt have kept you here when you ought to have been with your poor father."

"There's no use in reproaching me," replied he in a sulky tone, "I know my own business and my own duty."

Jeanneton saw his temper, and not for the first time, for he had been often subject to fits of peevishness, in the midst of her kindness and his own abstraction. She said in a soothing way,

"My dear Caribert, no one means to reproach you; don't think that; but tell me, where have you been all day, ever since you left us?"

"Where have I been? why at home to be sure."

"What the *whole* day?" demanded Claude, anxiously."

"Did'nt I say so?" retorted Caribert roughly. "What do you all mean by questioning me in this manner"

Claude walked up and down the room; Jeanneton laid her hand on Caribert's, but he drew his away abruptly; and the eldest sister, who was of a hot temper, exclaimed, "I really don't see, Caribert, why you should be so cross with us all, your best friends. I think you might have walked about the hills a little, to cool your anger, instead of coming here to vent it on us."

"I thank you Mademoiselle Catrine," replied he, rising; "but I did'nt think it unwise to give you a call, and say 'good evening,' before I went out to-morrow morning to kill the bear that wounded my father, or be killed myself—for one of the two shall happen, as I am a man!"

This was touching a chord that harmonized with the best feelings of the listeners, for they all, two of them more particularly, were as much alive to the danger of Caribert as their own. Claude stopt short,—and Jeanneton, unable to suppress her emotions any longer, started from her seat, caught hold of Caribert's hand as he was dating from the door, and burst into tears.

"Say, stay, for Heaven's sake, Caribert!" sobbed she. "Is this

the farewell you make me? I never thought you had so much cruelty in you."

"Let me go now, Jeanneton, there's a good girl," said he shaking her off, "such fooling as this torments me."

With these words he walked away, and the whole party, stupefied more or less at the scene, were for a moment silent. Jeanneton stood leaning against the door, looking after him, through her tears; until Claude, after a moment's pause, exclaimed "There must be something wrong with him—I see that clearly. Perhaps I have been injuring him after all, by my suspicions!"

"Suspicious!" echoed the sisters, but in an inquiring tone.

"Never mind," said Claude, "this is no time to explain, I'll go after him, and have the whole cleared up one way or another. Let me pass, Jeanneton. There, kiss me—all may be well yet. I shall be back soon, girls, depend on it."

As he stepped out, Caribert's figure was scarcely perceptible. It was nearly dark, and Claude was just going to halloo to him to stop, until he reflected that in his angry mood that might not please him; and in order to come up with him, he cut up the mountain to intersect his homeward path. He kept his eye all the while on his object; and with a pang of mingled conviction, astonishment and rage, he saw him suddenly turn out of his road, and strike off round the projecting rock, formerly mentioned, in a direct line for the pine grove. The first impulse would have led Claude to overtake, and all at once pour out his upbraidings on him. But he instantaneously determined to follow him at a cautious distance, and wait until positive evidence was before him, to authorize and add weight to the flood of reproaches, which were all ready to overwhelm the culprit. He accordingly followed at a slow pace, with a throbbing but determined heart, prepared for whatever result might come; and even when he lost sight of Caribert in the increasing darkness, he was as sure of his track, as if the instinct of the blood-hound had been joined to the resentment of the man.

Aline was entering the place of rendezvous on one side, when Caribert came in at the other. She answered the loud whisper which asked if she was there, by the sweetest of all sounds to a lover's ear—the quickened step rustling mysteriously through the brambles of a sombre grove, the short-breathed sigh of welcome and impatience, and next, the half uttered expressions of happiness, when she leaned her head forward to meet his ardent embrace. Caribert seemed to forget for a moment all the inquietudes and angry feelings of the day, and he told his story of what had passed in a clear and collected manner. When he announced his intention of accompanying his father on his expedition of vengeance the following morning, the womanish feelings of Aline began to raise up in her bosom. She did not attempt to dissuade him from his enterprise; but just at the moment that Claude reached the spot, (every nerve trembling as he crept cautiously on,) and listened to the murmuring of the voices, he heard the following dialogue.

Aline.—No, I should rather urge you to go than wish you to shrink back—but surely you ought to take some assistance.

Caribert.—No, no, the business shall be mine, and mine only. I will resolve that I have lost none of my former power. You don't doubt my resolution?"

Aline.—God forbid ! no, dearest Caribert, but I know you are ill to-night. Your forehead and your hands are burning hot, and could I but see your face, I am sure it must bear the marks of fever.

Caribert.—Even so, my girl, it is so much the better—my arm will be the stronger.

Aline.—I hope, it will, but still a companion or two would ensure your object, and remove my fears.

Caribert.—Whom would you have me ask ? you would not wish me to humble myself to Guilloteaux and the others who have so often reproached my idleness of late ?

Aline.—No indeed I would not, but there is one who has never reproached you—poor Claude.

Caribert.—Yes, yes he does at all times, absent or present. The sight of him or the thought of him is quite enough—I am beginning to hate him, in spite of myself.

Aline.—You ought rather to hate me for turning your heart from so true a friend !

Caribert.—Hate you, Aline ! Oh God ! if I could but tell you how I love you !

Here the sounds of a repetition of embraces came to the ears of Claude, like the hissing of so many serpents. He crept still closer to the speakers, and the dialogue went on.

Caribert.—You have named the last man in the world from whom I could deign to ask aid of any kind. Besides I am not pleased at his coming so much here. You ought not to encourage him, Aline.

Aline.—Do you think me capable of such baseness ? Do you suppose I could pretend to him what I don't feel ?

This was a blow as severe as it was unintended to the feelings of Caribert, for Aline had never dreamt of his pretended attachment to Jeanneton. He had studiously avoided the mention of his deception, which he was quite sure she would not have permitted, even though their intercourse were to be sacrificed to its discontinuance. He was therefore sorely hurt by her present remark ; and his irritation, as is common in such cases, disposed him to turn upon the objects least blameable and most injured. He replied, “ I think you ought at once to tell him to give up his attentions, and to keep away entirely from you.”

Aline.—Heavens ! how could I do that ? What would his sisters think of me ?

Caribert.—What need you care for his sisters ? they are as odious to me as he is.

Aline.—My dear Caribert—you don't know what you are saying.—What's the matter with you ?

Caribert.—I tell you but the truth, Aline—and in fact this whole farce must have an end. Why, do you know, since I must confess it, that foolish girl, Jeanneton, appears to have taken a fancy to me, and teases me to death by her attentions ; and I think that the whole set, brothers and sisters, have a design upon me.

“ Villain !” exclaimed Claude, at these words, unable longer to contain himself, almost choked with rage, and bursting through the tangled briars ; “ Villain come forward, that I may tear your false heart from your bosom !”

Aline, terrified at the recognition of his voice, in a tone so now and

shocking, uttered a scream, and threw herself upon Caribert's breast. He was thunderstruck. He could not reply, but claspng her firmly to him with his left arm, he struck fiercely with the other in the direction of the voice. His stick met only the passive resistance of the overhanging branches.

"Where are you, liar, odious, treacherous liar?" vociferated Claude: "are you flying from me? Stand, coward, stand!"

Caribert rushed towards the voice, dragging Aline with him, and dealing forward in the darkness his harmless blows.

"Oh, Claude! Oh, Caribert!" cried Aline, "stop in mercy! What would you do?" and here throwing herself between the enraged but invisible rivals, she put forward one hand. It met with Claude's outstretched arm, which she grasped firmly; adding in accents faint from her fright, "Claude, dear Claude, forbear! if my father hears this I am undone!"

"What, Aline! do you supplicate the pitiful spy?" asked Caribert bitterly, "do you call the skulking wretch, *dear* Claude? Why cannot my arm reach the injurious dog?"

Claude was arrested on the spot, his whole tide of vengeful feelings for an instant stopped. The touch of Aline's fingers acted like magic on him. He caught her arm, and while she trembled in every joint, he pressed the hostage hand repeatedly to his lips. He left it unhesitatingly in his. His embrace was like the kiss of peace, yet she shuddered when she felt Caribert's heart throbbing against hers.

"For the sake of heaven, Claude," cried she, "I conjure you, leave this fatal spot. This is a moment of destruction to us all. We know not what we are doing or saying."

"You have saved him," replied Claude—"I leave him in his guilt."

The outrageous Caribert here burst from her hold, but she again folded her arms round him, and prevented his advance. Claude stepped back, and as he retreated, said in a suffocating voice, "I go, Aline: I leave you and him for ever. Thank God, the darkness and your influence have spared him, from my passionate revenge. Let him live in misery and disgrace—but for the sake of your own happiness, of your own character, shun him as you would the plague. I acquit you of all share in his infamy. I have heard enough from both your lips, to let me know the truth. If the serpent has won your heart, I cannot blame you: but expect nothing from the wretch who could betray his bosom friend, and basely calumniate my innocent sister. Adieu, Aline, you shall never see me more! Bid me farewell, it is all I ask."

"Farewell, farewell," cried Aline, almost unconsciously. "God bless you," replied he: "farewell, farewell for ever!"

She heard the rustling of the branches as he rapidly forced his way through the grove, and when it was no longer audible, she leaned her head on Caribert's shoulder, and wept aloud. He, during the energetic denunciation of Claude, had been forcibly affected by the whole tenor of what was said. He felt the justice of every word—he could not interrupt his accuser—and there was something almost solemn in the heart-broken accents coming thus upon him, through the profound darkness of night, so abruptly and so resistless. He felt relieved by the departure of his injured friend—he was beginning to breathe more freely.

as he heard his retiring steps—but every frenzied emotion burst out again when Aline gave way to her tears, which he attributed at the instant to her sorrow for the absence of his now detested rival.

"What," cried he, "do you weep for him? Is it thus you judge between us? Is this your love for me?"

"For God's sake spare me any further wretchedness," sobbed she. "Would you have me savage enough to be insensible to such a scene as this? Would you wish for a proof of my love that would show me to be unworthy of yours?"

"Forgive me, my own Aline. I am afraid only that I must appear criminal in your eyes,—but recollect how I have adored you. All ties of friendship, I would almost say, of honor, were weak beside my passion! Tell me you don't blame me, and that you love me as much as ever."

Sophistry is a most eloquent weapon, when the speaker and the hearer are in sympathy: and this being the case in the present instance, Aline was totally overcome. She returned Caribert's embrace again and again. She made him swear that he would not seek a meeting with Claude, to which his oath to his father was also an impediment; and after a thousand entreaties on her part, and assurances on his, relative to his safety on the morrow, Aline parted from him at the edge of the grove; and he, when she was safely in the house, retraced his steps through its dark paths, and then took his way towards home.

Alone on his dreary route, amidst the darkness of night, and the desolateness of nature, his mind was quickly up in all the tumult of conflicting passion. He felt degraded before himself; his pride was bent down by the weight of his own consciousness, rather than the reproaches of him he had so injured. Aline had heard the damning accusation, though she could not witness the corresponding blush on his cheek.—She sympathized with his accuser—she wept for him. What might she not feel when alone, and left to the strong discrimination of her clear-sighted understanding! This thought brought with it all the subsidiary pangs of his fierce but humbled spirit. Then again came the reflection of his unworthy conduct to Jeanne-ton. His deceit before her face seemed nothing: he had arguments at hand to justify that; but the meanness of his slander when she was away! That was the thought which let him down to the level of disgrace. But there was still one feeling worse than all the rest. *Twice* during the day he had been branded with the name of coward! *Twice*! and by the two persons in the world who knew his character best. Time was when not his father or his friend would have dared to breathe a similar thought.—What then could prompt it now? Could his nature have been changed, and was it true. He paused as he asked himself these questions; and in the phrenzy of his agitation he found himself at the turn of the path leading to Claude's cottage.

He had taken that path unconsciously, and it seemed to him as if the demon of revenge had been guiding his steps. He started back in horror at the thought which rushed upon him. It was the strong desire of vengeance. He saw Claude pictured to his imagination in a full dignity of triumphant virtue, and he leaped forward as it were to trample him under his feet. He had no sooner conceived the thought, than he

shrank wildly from its touch, and putting his hands to his forehead, he found the cold sweat pouring down from it, while his heart felt all on fire. He turned from the path, recovered his homeward way, and soon arrived at the cottage.

The door was ajar. He entered softly, and perceived, by the light of the little lamp which glimmered in a corner, that his father was asleep, and that his mother had also lain down on the bed, tired no doubt, by her assiduous attention to his ailment. The night was piercing cold; and Caribert shivered in every joint. He softly stirred up the wood ashes, and raked together the expiring faggots. He sat down by this inefficient and comfortless fire, and patted the head of Pero, the only dog now left them, who awoke and acknowledged the friendly touch by a lazy movement of his tail. Caribert leaned his head upon the table, and sat thus for a considerable time; and must have suffered all the violent symptoms of ague and fever, for the old man, who had been awakened and lay listening for some minutes, at length started up, and called out, "Why, Marie! Caritet! what shaking is that! Who is rattling the table there! The dawn is breaking. Marie, I say! Caribert.

His wife started up, as did the old man; but Caribert answered not. They both approached, and while she lighted a candle, the father aroused him from his heavy but fevered slumber. To the ejaculation of "What ho! Caribert, what are you shaking at? do you see a ghost in your sleep?" he replied by a bound from his seat, a vacant stare, and an exclamation of "What ghost? Whose? He is not dead yet, is he?"

As he spoke these words, he gazed wildly around him, and passed his hand hurriedly before his eyes, as if to rid himself of some horrid fancy.

"No, not yet," answered the father; "but by the blessing of heaven, in two hours hence he shall welter in his heart's blood."

The expression of countenance with which Caribert answered this speech made the old woman shudder. The father thought only of the bear; the wandering mind of the son had fixed itself on a different object. But he recovered himself in a moment; and seeing the bustle of preparation that his father began to make, he prepared in frenzied haste to accoutre himself for the chase.

His arrangements went on silently, and were completed before those of his father, who stopped every moment to utter expressions of anticipated vengeance on his enemy, and to scrutinize with an unnecessary minuteness every atom of his weapons, to satisfy himself that nothing might be wanting for the approaching struggle. When Caribert was completely cased in his leathern doublet and gaiters, his belt fastened on, his knife placed in it, his strong gloves on his hands, and his pike firmly clenched within them, he appeared to both father and mother to look once more like himself; to wear the semblance of united activity and strength which had always distinguished him. The old man contemplated him proudly, and saw nothing but the fire of valor in his rolling eyes and flushed complexion; but the mother more experienced, and more alive to such symptoms, trembled to think that they arose from fever and a wayward mind.

Every thing being completed in the way of equipment, the hunters set out, followed by their dog. But the poor animal seemed to obey,

unwillingly the familiar call of his old master. He looked about, and appeared to inquire of those around him for the former companion of all his hunting feats. He was evidently dispirited, and lingered in the track of Caribert, instead of boldly springing forwards, and, leading the party, as had ever been his wont until this morning. The anxious wife and mother embraced both father and son. "For Heaven's sake, Larcole," said she, "be as steady as brave to-day! Remember your lame arm in the attack; and do not expose yourself if it feels crippled."

"Never fear, Dame, never fear! I am fit for any enterprise this morning. With Caribert beside me once more dressed in the only suit which is becoming to him in my eyes, I feel as strong as a dozen."

"God grant that all be right with him!" replied she, as she gave Caribert a parting kiss on either cheek. "How do you feel, my child? you were burning hot a moment ago, and you are now shivering again."

"O, mother, it is only from anxiety to attack old Bruin:—I am as well as ever, believe me," said he, with an assumed gaiety. "Now, then, father, are you ready?"

"And willing, my boy," said the old man, briskly; and, waving their hands in answer to the salute of their anxious companion, they stepped forward in the direction of the Pic.

The fatal results of this eventful expedition must be taken, in some measure, upon evidence not quite positive. They have been gathered from the scarce coherent disclosures of insanity—the broken and shuddering confessions of a maniac's lucid hours—the knowledge of the actors' characters—and the probabilities of the fact. Such is the foundation on which the universal opinion is built as to the accuracy of what follows.

Soon after Caribert and his father had quitted their home, the morning, which had only just broke, began to be more than commonly overcast. A snow shower, mixed with rain, assailed them ere they reached the Pic du Midi; and the piercing cold of the air, added to the sleet beasting cuttingly into his face, brought on, with Caribert, repeated attacks of violent and alternate fever and shivering. When they arrived at the den of the bear, which was formed of a cavity in the western side of the mountain, close to that terrific precipice which I have already endeavored to describe, they were both benumbed, and scarcely capable of exertion; but the old man, rousing up all his wrath and courage for the onset, approached the cave, and with loud shouts of defiance, endeavored to stir up the savage animal's rage. The summons was no sooner heard than answered. A horrible growl sent out from the recess, was followed by the appearance of the bear, which rushed forth as if in conscious recollection of yesterday's triumph. At the appalling sound and sigh, Pedro, the faithful and courageous dog, unsupported by his former ally, and having his share of brute remembrance too, of the late rencontre, hung down his head, dropped his tail, and fled yelping down the mountain. Old Larcole grasped his pike firmly, and advanced. The hideous monster reared itself up on its hind legs, stretched out its fore paws, and as, with its jaws yawning wide, its fearful tusks displayed, and growling with horrid energy, it was in the very act of

springing forward, the veteran hunter stepped close up, and aimed a thrust, with no flinching strength, right at his enemy's heart. He was not far wide of that vital spot. His pike pierced the left breast, and went out clearly at the shoulder. Rendered frantic by the pain, the bear bounded up, flung itself full upon its undaunted assailant, and fell upon him to the earth. The old man, burying his head under the body of his foe, received on the back and shoulders of his doublet its unavailing efforts to penetrate the thick folds of armor with tusks and nails. He tugged at the pike to extricate it from the body, but his position was such that he could not succeed, and every new effort only tended to give issue to the thick stream of blood which flowed from the wound. During this frightful struggle, the yells of the bear were mixed with, and smothered by the loud execrations of the old man. The latter at length, gave up the hope of recovering his pike, but strove fairly next to get rid of his terrific burden. He succeeded so far as to get one leg clear, and with his nervous grasp, entwined round the body of the brute; he was rising on his knee, and called out, 'Now, Caribert, now! To his heart—to his heart the death blow, now! strike, strike!'—but Caribert struck not! He stood gazing on the scene—panic-struck—fixed to the spot with emotions not fathomable to man, —a terrible but not solitary instance of the perilous risks run by mental courage, as well as by human virtue. I do not inquire into the mystery—but there he stood, its horrid and shuddering illustration!

The old man was now getting clear, but the bear had his hold in turn. His huge paws were fastened with a dreadful force round one of his victim's thighs; and recovering from his sprawling posture, he began to draw him backwards, evidently in the design of regaining his den. The old man's courage rose with his danger, for he alertly drew his knife from his belt, opened the blade, and plunged it repeatedly into the body of the bear. The latter leaped and bounded with agony; and Larcole recovering his feet once more, succeeded in grasping the savage in his arms. But the trial could not be prolonged. He was drooping under the dreadful gripe—Breathless and faint, he could only utter some terrific curses against the recreant who had abandoned him; and while Caribert gazed, his brain on fire, his hands outstretched, his tongue cleaving to his mouth, but his limbs trembling, his heart sunk, and his feet rooted to the earth, he saw the white locks of his aged father floating over the neck of his destroyer; while the dying animal, in his blindness, not knowing what he did, had retreated to the very edge of the precipice, slipping at every backward plunge in the slough formed by the snow and his own heart's blood, by which it was dissolved. The old man, seeing his terrible fate, seemed to acquire for an instant the gigantic energy of despair. Throwing one glance across the horrid space on the border of which he stood he screamed in a voice of thunder, "Caribert! Caribert!" The terrible expression conveyed in the hoarse scream, struck on the mind of his son with an electrical shock. Suddenly roused from his stupor, he recovered for an instant all his recollection and his courage. He uttered a cry of corresponding fierceness,—swung his brandished pike

—rushed forwards with open arms to seize his father, and snatch him from his destiny,—but it was too late ! The monster touched on the extreme edge—lost his footing—plunged instinctively forward—took another backward step,—and just as Caribert believed he had grasped his father in his outstretched arms, both man and bear were lost to his sight, and their groans came mingling in the air, as they went crashing down below.

CHAPTER VIII.

What Caribert did, or said, or felt, we must not enquire. Whether his reason took flight in silent agony, or in screaming despair, can only be a matter of conjecture, or rather, of imagination. He saw the consummation of the sacrifice ; and he often afterwards recounted the scene, in fits of madness, and in passing moments of reason, and never deviated in his tale.

The person who first saw him after this dreadful hour, was she, who in light and darkness, reason or frenzy, was all and everything to him. It cannot be known how soon, but the same morning, and probably immediately after the completion of the tragedy, he hurried to the house of Moinard. The last expiring moment of his reason probably prompted him to fly to Aline ; a consciousness of his coming madness—a desire of breathing out the last words of rational thought upon her bosom—an instinct—an inspiration—Who may divine the impulse ? Be it what it might, it led him to *her*.

Aline's anxiety had totally prevented her from sleeping the preceding night, and she was up with the dawn. She would have wished to go to Claude's cottage, to have seen him and his sisters, and freely and frankly to have communicated and consulted upon their relative situations. But delicacy, with respect to him and Jeanneton immediately repressed this first suggestion of her feelings, and she was obliged to content herself with waiting till Mennette awoke, when she despatched her with a message to the eldest sister, requesting her to come down to her immediately. Her father was still in bed, and her anxiety leading her far quicker than Mennette's greatest possible speed, she walked from the house an hour after her departure, and proceeded towards the Pine Grove, in hopes of meeting the little messenger, with her who was the object of her mission.

The interview that she expected, the confession she had to make, and all its intricacy of explanations and excuses, were sufficiently calculated to create awkwardness and embarrassment in a delicate mind. What were they in comparison to the shock which was preparing to burst on her most sensitive heart !

As she approached the grove, and within a few paces of the entrance, her eyes cast down, her arms folded, and her mind involved in deep varieties of thought, she heard the rapid approach of hurried

footsteps, and looking up, she perceived the appalling figure of Caribert—dressed in all the rude and fierce habiliments of hunting warfare; his pike brandished in his hand, as she had first seen him before their fatal acquaintance,—but with a countenance ten thousand times more terrible. He was now pale—his looks haggard—his eyes as if bursting from their sockets—every feature, every expression, giving evidence of the ravages of disease, despair, and madness.

In the first moment of her terror she turned to fly, but his voice transfixed her to the spot.

"Stay, stay, my Aline!" cried he; "stay, my bride?" She stopped and looked at him in speechless misery, for the truth of his situation darted across her brain.

"That's an unkind look of greeting," continued he. "Is not this our marriage day? I am breathless with running—You don't know me in my wedding dress!" and he here laughed in horrid confirmation of her dreadful doubts.

"O Father of mercy! save and pity him," cried she, in agony.

He took one of her hands, and perceiving her to tremble violently, he exclaimed, "What, are you afraid of me? look at me! I have not a drop of his blood upon my hands—he threw himself over—you don't suppose I murdered him!—But he is dead—dead—dashed to pieces! save me—O! save me from his dreadful curses!"

He here seemed to feel a pang of horrid remembrance. He flung himself on his knees at Aline's feet, and hid his face in the folds of her dress. Shocked and terrified beyond all power of recollection, she screamed for help, and as she loudly called on her father, a new chord was touched in the mind of the wretched maniac.

"Father! father!" exclaimed he,—"aye, call, call loudly, but he cannot answer! O God! I have no father. I saw him fall into the chasm."

He here started on his feet, and holding her firm with one hand, he threw away his pike and leaned forward, with the other stretched open, and looked as if gazing down the frightful precipice, and striving to grasp the falling sufferer. Moinard now approached rapidly from the house, and Aline, turning once more to Caribert, added in a supplicating but half distracted tone—

"What is the dreadful meaning of your words and looks? Tell me, I conjure you, Caribert, by your affection for me, tell me what it is that has driven you to this state?"

Moinard at this moment came up, and seeing the terrified looks of Aline, and the ferocious attitude of Caribert, believed that the latter was attempting some violence upon her, he seized the pike and darted forwards, exclaiming, "Villain! would you murder her?" "He is mad, father, he is mad!" she called out, "he knows not what he does!"

Caribert, not heeding her, replied to the exclamation of Moinard "Yes. murder, murder is what I want—but oh! not her!" He here took her hand and pressed it to his lips. Moinard, almost petrified with surprise and affright at the supposed danger of his child, stood motionless, while the maniac continued, "Why my own best Aline, you see your father has come to give us his blessing—kneel to him—

with me! He forced her to the position, "Now swear to be mine, and mine only, in life and death—you often promised it, swear!"

"O, God, O God!" uttered Aline.

"You do not swear," cried Caribert: "Moinard, make her swear it. I know they are going to drag me from her—they wait for the parricide! Swear, swear, Aline?"

"Say any thing to pacify him," whispered Moinard, who was supporting Aline on the other side. "I do swear then," said she, "solemnly, most solemnly swear, never to be another's while you live! In reason or in madness, I am your's. So hear me, and so help me heaven!"

The tone of awful reality with which she pronounced these words struck upon the father's heart with a sound of shocking apprehension. He feared that the terror of the scene had affected her reason too. He raised her up; and Caribert loosening her hand, exultingly exclaimed, "She is mine, she is mine. Now do your worst against me. Seize me, kill me if you can!" He then burst into another of those horrid laughs so common to maniacs; and by a rapid transition to the cause of his estrangement he added furiously—"Tis false, I did not hurl him over. Pero ran and I stood still, but the bear alone dragged him down. I saw it—yet I stood still! Oh coward! coward! coward!" He here struck his clenched fist against his forehead with terrible violence; and as if all at once losing every recollection but of the harrowing event, he turned his steps away and fled howling up the mountain. Moinard's heart seemed frozen with horror, and when at length he looked at his daughter's face, he found she had fainted in his arms.

I must leave my readers to imagine much of the substance of what followed this scene: the daughter's confession of her secret intercourse and strong attachment, the father's attempted reproaches and involuntary forgiveness—the measures taken on all hands for the discovery of the manner and cause of old Larcole's dreadful death, and the steps pursued for the security and recovery of his unfortunate son.

The wretchedness of Aline was considerably heightened by the intelligence brought to her by Manette. It appeared that Claude on his return home the preceding night, had communicated to his anxious sisters the whole circumstances of his discovery, Caribert's perfidy, and (as they would have it) the deceitfulness of Aline. They could not conceal from themselves or deny to Claude, that she had never shewn him the least encouragement, nor that she had almost wholly given up her intercourse with them, and it was now evident for the purpose of avoiding him; and that, in fact, no blame could attach to her from having given way to the impulses of her heart, when they were unopposed by any obstacles of delicacy or positive duty. But still their deep mortification at the double disgrace which had fallen on the family determined them, in spite of their own reason and his remonstrances, to renounce their friendship for one whom, had they known all that was about to happen, they would have acknowledged to need their compassion as much as she merited their regard.

But the contest between their hearts and their pride, both equally wounded, was soon-forgotten in the contemplation of the loss they were about to suffer. Claude had determined to abandon the country, and never to pass a day in the scene of his past hope and present misery. He at once decided to sell his little property, and remove to some distant district of his native mountains, for his affection to the Pyrenees was not injured by his own unhappiness. Kind and yielding as his disposition was in general, he could, as we have already seen, be firm when the case required it. This was a case that called for an exertion of all his latent energies. Resisting the tears, the entreaties, the reproaches of those sisters whom he loved so tenderly, he announced to them his unshaken resolution, and passed the night in preparations for his voluntary exile. He made all the arrangements requisite for their guidance while he was to be separated from them. He recommended his sisters to each other's care, for in those wild and pastoral districts, they wanted no other protection; and having furnished himself with a small supply of money, he took his leave of them with the dawn, and proceeded to the Mairie of the Commune, to secure his passport, and consult with the rustic magistrate, on the best steps to be taken for the disposal of the old and the acquirement of another residence.

He was gone when Mannette reached the cottage, and the only return she received for Aline's friendly message, was an account of his departure, and a volley of reproaches, which she comprehended as little as her sister deserved them.

Moinard took the promptest means of informing the authorities of the dreadful catastrophe which he suspected from the incoherent phrases of Caribert. The whole commune was quickly in motion; and the several inhabitants performed their various offices consistent with their different characters, of consoling the widow, seeking the dead body, making inquisitive researches at the cottages, of Madame Larcole, Claude and Moinard, securing the maniac, disseminating the true intelligence, or fabricating false.

The ferment of horror and regret excited throughout the neighborhood was proportioned to the shocking nature of the events, and the consideration enjoyed by the unfortunate sufferers, dead and living. The wide-spread feeling was compassion. As soon as the details of the morning had acquired some consistency, there was scarcely a heart that did not throb with pity for the maniac, his widowed mother, and desolate mistress. Even the sisters of Claude, who saw in the involuntary suggestions of superstitious vengeance only a just visitation on the chief actor, even they could not withhold their commiseration from the innocent partner of his misery. They were among the first to fly to Aline and offer their condolences, and she felt a satisfaction quite apart from any thing like triumph, in listening to the ardent and innocent expressions of sympathy, which poured with unbroken fluency from the artless Jeanneton.

In this season of universal kindness, there was however, one malignant spirit abroad, and did I wish to present a painful picture of evil, I could make this wretch a prominent character here. I prefer leaving him in the shade; merely stating that he was one of those base-minded, envious companions who hated Caribert for his supe-

riority, and now in his utter ruin came forth to blacken his character by the foulest insinuations. He spread the report, founded only on his pretended belief, that Caribert had been the murderer of his father; that in a moment of fierce altercation he had thrown him from the precipice, together with the body of the bear they had killed; and that his apparent frenzy was assumed in order to screen himself from suspicion and punishment.

Monstrous as this story was, it gained a momentary belief; and the absence of Caribert, who had fled in his delirium far into the mountain fastnesses, seemed to give weight to the calumny. He was accordingly pursued, not from the charitable feeling due to a wandering wretch, but with the vengeful ardor of injured justice, ready to crush a detested criminal.

After a day and night spent in the search, he was at last overtaken by the officers of the law, seized, and conveyed a prisoner to the chief place of the district. He was suffering from all the violence of a dreadful crisis; and so clear were the evidences of insanity, so little shadow of reason appeared to justify the odious imputation, and so strong a proof of the truth was apparent in the position of the dead and mangled body, (which was found at the bottom of the chasm locked in the death-grasp of its hideous destroyer,) that the prayers of the wretched widow, added to those of the afflicted Aline, and a numerous crowd of applicants, were granted by the authorities; and the wretched sufferer was safely conducted to the paternal cottage, and given up to the natural attentions of his mother. In all her cares she was assisted by the undaunted and indefatigable Aline, who vowed herself to his service, and never shrunk one moment from the duty. They nursed him together in his worst paroxysms, aided by the voluntary cares of the neighboring men, when force was necessary, and under the guidance of such medical advice as the village doctors were able to bestow.

The unsubdued strength of Caribert's constitution brought him through this trial for his life. He arose from his bed a confirmed maniac, but still vigorous in bodily health. He was watched with minute assiduity, but he never attempted the slightest violence against himself or others. When Aline was in his presence he was as tame as the dog that crouched beside his chair, unconscious of the part it bore in the abandonment which drove its master mad. When he missed his idol from the chamber, he still continued to address her in wild but ardent language, as if his visionary notions had always figured her before him. But sometimes during her absence, he used to turn from the main subject of his wanderings, and recur with shuddering and horror to that of his father's death. A wild scream, an execration of his own cowardice, or an abrupt and energetic expression suited to such a desperate conflict as had cost the old man his life, was the forerunner of these excesses of fury. But the moment that Aline returned, called in by the attendants, or herself on the watch for these dreaded sounds, the patient sunk at once into a state of innocent and even childish subjection.

These symptoms related to the days immediately succeeding his misfortune. In a fortnight's time he was wonderfully recovered in

health; he was able to go out; and so little apprehension did he excite, that in another week they allowed him to wander alone (his greatest delight) from cottage to cottage, gathering bouquets of wild flowers to present to the neighbors. They received him with deep pity; and even the little children, to whom he was never an object of endearment in his years of reason, used now in his hours of insanity to hail his presence with pleasure, and play with him without fear.

On these occasions he was always carefully attended. Some of the youths were ever on the watch. But whoever might volunteer the duty, whether performed as a task or a pleasure by the kind neighbors, there was one who for many days accompanied his steps at a cautious distance, watching his harmless ramblings, and ever ready to come closer should he wander into danger. That one was Aline.

The contrast between the strong feelings of this admirable girl and the inferiority of Jeanneton was never so conspicuous as now. The latter, far from following the arduous example of Aline, shrunk with terror from the slightest approach of the object to whom she had fancied herself tenderly attached. It was not that she experienced any of her first sensations of indignant shame for his deceit, or any want of feeling for his situation, but merely that a constitutional weakness of mind made her tremble at the possible contact with madness. Every one was astonished to observe how slight was the force of her former passion, in comparison with her foolish fears; and Aline could not avoid a sort of satisfied and almost exculpatory feeling for the offender, when she saw how little capable of powerful sentiment was the object of his injustice, and when she reflected that he did the wrong for her sake.

Moinard, whose ruling feelings were the love of money mixed with a strong affection for his daughter, seemed on this occasion to forget all the first, in his more marked indulgence of the latter. Aline possessed as much of his respect as his love, and had that complete ascendancy over him in all things, which we sometimes (but rarely) see parents generous and wise enough to concede to children superior to them by nature. He yielded to every suggestion of Aline, which had for its object the amelioration of Caribert's afflicting malady. As far as his means went there was no comfort requisite for the maniac that he did not amply provide; and, a still greater proof of his submission to Aline, he never opposed her attendance upon him. On the contrary he frequently shared it with her. In these moments of extraordinary fellowship, both father and daughter had many serious debates on the subject dearest to both their hearts; and the compact usually entered into between them was—that her father should never in the slightest degree attempt to dissuade her from the duty to which she had devoted herself, that he never should urge her to marry any man while Caribert lived; and she for her part pledged herself by solemn promises equivalent to oaths, that even should he recover his reason, she would never, under any inducement or circumstance, become his wife.

To this last condition in their agreement, pressed with all the force of a prudent and fond parent's energy, her own good sense induced a prompt and unequivocal compliance. She saw clearly that even in a state of perfect recovery, the shock received by his mind must always leave it debilitated, and that his impetuous feelings would be ever on the brink of a relapse; and she shuddered at the idea of an union with one, who had in a crisis so terrible, been the cause, from whatever accident of feeling, of so horrid a death to his parent.

Thus then the melancholy prospect before her was, in the event of Caribert's recovery, a life of mournful celibacy; in case of his protracted insanity, a harassing and miserable attendance upon him. The latter she fulfilled with a dreary gratification—the former probable sacrifice she looked forward to with ardent hope. His death, which could alone free her from all her engagements, never came in idea to her mind that her heart did not sink within her. But that possible event, to her so shocking, was to Moinard the strong hope that bore him up under all his sorrows. He calculated in the first instance on the violence of the attack carrying Caribert fairly off; and when he observed him to gain strength, he hoped for a relapse. The visits he paid him were for the observation of his malady, rather than its alleviation; and while he indulged Aline in all her demands on account of her lost lover, it was to preserve appearances, and conceal from her his real wishes, which he well knew would be shocking in the extreme to her. Moinard's heart was stern, and even hard, in all the relations of life, except those in which he stood towards Aline. His only point of feeling was for her. He encouraged the permission freely given to Caribert to ramble about. He thought it very likely that some event might cross him in his wanderings that would give a more violent turn to his subdued sensations—and he did not argue amiss.

A chance view, one evening, of two of the hunters returning from the chase, with the skin of a bear, the spoils of the day, suddenly opened a new channel in the wayward feelings of the maniac. The whole memory of his former life seemed to burst at once through the darkness of his mind. He started up, bounded forward, hallooed wildly, "To the chase, father! come, come!" and from that moment he was fully impressed with the notion that the ghost of his hapless parent was continually following him with menacing attitudes and upbraiding looks; and to fly from these reproaches he hurried along, using such expressions as might prove his ardor in the pursuit to which he fancied the spectre was urging him.

This abrupt transition from a state of languid apathy was, nevertheless, unattended by any disposition to outrage. The only danger to be apprehended was that which might befall himself. His steps constantly pointed towards the Tourmalet, that near neighborhood of the fatal scene; and it was feared that if ever he succeeded in reaching the horrid precipice alone, he might in a paroxysm of frenzy hurl himself into the chasm. The cares of his guardians were therefore increased tenfold, and were not sparingly partaken by her who might be called without much exaggeration, an angel among them.

In one of the wonderful varieties of his disorder, some days after this unfortunate change, he suddenly became better, and for a few hours seemed to have actually recovered his reason. The doctor accounted for this by various theories, too deep for the understanding of his hearers; but the old women attributed it entirely to the influence of a new moon. However the point might be, the momentary hope was soon dispelled. The rational discourse held by the patient during his lucid interval, his ample recognition of the persons surrounding him, his feeling of the truth of his own situation, all quickly vanished in the sudden relapse which took place almost immediately. This effort at recovery seemed to plunge his mind still deeper into the abyss, as each fresh struggle of a drowning man, by weakening his powers, but sinks him in exhaustion.

He no longer knew those who were near him. Even Aline had lost her hold upon his memory; and events, as well as persons, seemed utterly effaced from it. He talked in wild and wandering strains of objects and of beings whom he had never seen, grew confused in all his conceptions of the things before him; and seemed totally to forget all connection between the present and the past.

He still rambled about, and was still attended by Aline. She now scarcely quitted the cottage of his mother, except to follow his steps; or at night, when he was closely guarded by some one or other of his neighbors and former fellow hunters, who now forgot all their previous jealousies, and vied in their alacrity on this charitable duty.

CHAPTER IX.

BETWEEN five and six weeks had thus rolled heavily over, each succeeding hour bearing some new load of care to those immediately concerned in the fate of my unfortunate hero. The snows melted away on the mountain tops; the ripening spring began to spread its green and flower besprinkled carpet on the plains; the flocks exchanged the dreary imprisonment of their wintry sheds for the highland pasturage, where the odorous herbage wooed them by its fragrance; and the shepherds resumed their annual tenantry of the loose built hovels, through which the summer airs sported almost as unobstructedly as on the naked hills around them. But while nature seemed revelling in enjoyment, the dark night of madness, and the sombre twilight of grief had set their seal upon the two minds the most fitted of all within their circle, to indulge in the luxuriant charms of the opening year.

There was one more too, who, though distant from the scene, was not out of the influence of these distresses. Claude, when he left his home, had made a parting request of his sisters, that they would

not attempt to follow his track, or strive to interrupt his purpose. To ensure their acquiescence, and to give him every fair chance of shaking off the memory of his afflictions, he made it a point that they were not to attempt any communication by letter, except in the case of some illness amongst them. He faithfully promised to let them hear from him frequently ; and trusting the best for their health and happiness, (for he had no dread for the elastic mind of Jeanneton) he hoped that an utter absence from all his late associations would root them out effectually from his mind.

As the weeks passed over his lone and melancholy career, he found that he was mistaken. It was in vain that he sought relief in the various novelties on his way. He traced the winding course of the Garonne from the mountains to the plains : he walked the banks of the canal of Languedoc, wandered through the streets of Toulouse, the first large town he had ever seen ; stood upon the shores of the Mediterranean, marvelled at the sight of ships and billows, and gazed astonished at the deep blue sky, reflected in the loveliest of moving mirrors. He saw wonders in the charms of nature, and miracles in the works of art, but he had no true enjoyment or heartfelt sympathy in aught of these ; for the cold discourse of strangers checked every warm emotion, and threw him upon the memory of darker days, as the strand which flings back an abandoned bark upon the chill bosom of the waves that wrecked it. He wrote constantly to his sisters, but all at second hand. Claude, like his former associates, was no scholar, and in these cases he was forced to have recourse to those dexterous bunglers who abound in every town in France—those “public writers,” who in their stunted little wooden hovels, melting in the summer heat, or suffocating by their winter’s stove, ply so flourishing a trade at the cost of their illiterate brethren, and mar with their vile rhetoric, with “taffeta phrase and silken terms precise,” the plain and honest expression of their unsophisticated employers. The paper was always filled by the dictation of Claude, and sullied by the style of the amanuensis. Not a spot was left unoccupied—the full heart seemed ever in want of space to deposit its overflowings, but not one syllable was ever to be seen—not one name recorded—not one sentiment expressed, of all that caused the heart’s repletion. This forced reserve, this abstinence from what had been till now the vital nourishment of Claude’s existence, was too unnatural to be persevered in. He ever felt the gnawing desire to speak of Aline. He thought of her, of nothing but her, in despite of time, of distance, and novelties, and resolutions. He made a thousand efforts to deceive himself. He seriously strove to persuade himself that his anxiety to return home was all on his sister’s account. He muttered to his conscience some warm expostulations about duty and affection, and the like ; but his conscience always retorted by the utterance of a simple name—that name which he adored as deeply and silently as the word which the devout Hebrew holds buried in his heart’s recesses.

He had done nothing yet towards the accomplishment of his journey’s ostensible purpose. In quitting the hills, he had insensibly taken a course foreign to his first design, and the more he saw of

civilization and society, the more he was convinced it was unfit for the adoption of a mountaineer. He resolved, then, to take to the Pyrenees once more; and felt his heart lighter, he knew not why, as he mounted their rugged sides, and inhaled the freshening breeze that seemed to welcome him.

As he tracked his way towards home, he examined minutely every place that might be likely to suit his views: but a thousand frivolous objections were involuntarily starting up, when any thing struck him as peculiarly adapted to them. He seemed plagued with a perversity of opposition to the very object he sought for. The fact was, his inclinations were not in tune with his projects, for while his eyes explored each new habitation, his head was fixed on the old one—and there never existed a speculation, planned by however wise a head, which might not be baffled by one feeling of the heart. In this case, at all events, Claude's plans went all for nothing: and he found himself, at length, after a journey of many a weary league, within a day's march of home; without having taken one step towards the design which was to remove him from it for ever.

The anxiety which had accompanied him on his expedition, increased tenfold as the latter was about to terminate. As he approached the sphere of his former acquaintance, he seemed to shrink into himself, a fear of meeting any one to whom he had been known before. He dreaded the announcement of that intelligence which alone he expected, and felt that the voice which should first proclaim to him the marriage of Aline and Caribert would sound like a death knell in his ears. In avoiding an encounter with the dreaded reality he kept, for his last day's march, high above the inhabited districts, and wandered in paths peopled only by the phantoms which his apprehensions conjured up.

When he at length got within sight of his cottage, and gazed with full eyes and a beating heart, far off beyond it, in the involuntary but vain desire of catching a glimpse of another, concealed from him by the unequal soil, the sun was sinking in a sea of haze, made radiant by his parting beams. Claude's shadow as he stood on the edge of Mount Arbizon, stretched far down the mountain, an emblem of his vague and exaggerated alarms, and seemed like them to hurry with gigantic movements towards the spot that contained their unconscious author. It was almost dark before he could summon resolution sufficient to descend into the inhabited valley and approach his own door; and he did so with great precaution not to meet any one in his path.

His gentle tap at the door was answered by a friendly "Come in," from the voice of Jeanneton. Fearful of alarming her by an abrupt entrance, he hesitated a moment, when she added in a more pressing tone, "Come in, Simon, are you afraid?"

"I am not Simon, my dear Jeanneton, and only afraid of frightening you," replied he, stepping into the kitchen, and meeting her as she advanced to open the door for her expected visitant.

"Claude!" cried she, throwing her arms round his neck; "my dear, dear brother!"

At this sound, Aimee, the youngest of the sisters, ran out from the

inner room, where she had been preparing for her early bed: and she joined her embraces and welcomes to those of Jeanneton.

"But my dear Jeanneton," said Claude, after they had all given vent to their joy at this meeting, "you did not expect me. What Simon was it for whom you were running to open the door?"

"Oh! nobody," replied she, blushing, "but Simon Guilloteaux of Bastau, who has stepped in now and then of an evening since you left us."

"It seems, that he's a welcome visitor, Jeanneton.

"Not a thousandth part as welcome as you, my dear brother," returned she, again and again embracing him.

"But Catrine," asked Claude, "where is she?"

"Gone to Sarancolin," replied Aimee; "you know this is letter day at the post office, and as we had none from you the last two letter days, we made sure of one this time."

"Poor Catrine!" exclaimed Claude, "she will be again disappointed." "Ah, but when she comes back and finds you here, instead of a letter!" said Aimee.

"Why that will certainly be better," replied Claude. "You were waiting up for Catrine, dear Jeanneton," added he.

"For her?" uttered Jeanneton, confusedly—"why—no—yes,—oh yes, I was expecting her."

All remark from the questioner was stopped by Aimee's crying out that she saw sister Catrine coming up the path close to the house.—To surprise her the more, both the girls insisted on Claude's concealing himself in the closet; and just as Jeanneton closed the door, she whispered in his ear, "Dear Claude, you need not say any thing to Catrine about Simon Guilloteaux; I'll tell you all by and by!"

Poor Catrine, chagrined and fatigued, more by her disappointment than her journey, came in out of heart, and out of temper. She sat down, exclaiming that she had no letter, and that she was sure Claude was dangerously ill or dead. The peevish way in which this was uttered, was not quite like the tone of conviction which announces our belief in a calamity; and when she saw the little effect it produced on her sisters, Catrine's anger was more evident than her grief.

"You are both very unfeeling," said she reproachfully. "I am astonished at you, Aimee; as for Jeanneton, I dare say she forgets dear Claude, as easily as she has poor Caribert, since she has taken up with that good-for-nothing fellow, Guilloteaux."

At these words Jeanneton looked anxiously towards the closet door, fearful of Claude's overhearing the accusation of levity so fiercely pronounced against her.

Catrine, in her sharp way, saw the glance, and the confusion of her sister, and bounced up briskly, exclaiming—"I'll lay my new hood to an eagle's feather, you have got the fellow hid in the closet! Let me in, Simon," cried she, pulling at the key. "Let me in, I say, or I'll break open the door. Let me in, let me in!"

Claude knowing her temper, flung the door open, and received her in his arms. Her heart, full as warm as her head was hot, bounded with astonished delight. She embraced her brother, then Jeanneton and Aimee, then Claude once more; and laughed and cried alternately for several minutes.

This whole scene was the greatest possible relief to poor Claude. An immense weight seemed removed from his breast. He felt the atmosphere of home penetrate to his heart; he wiped his full eyes without restraint; and sighed out manfully without fear of being sneered at. He sat down with all the sisters hanging about him, and for the first few minutes was not quite sure whether he was happy or miserable. But he soon sank into the old train of thought, and began beating about the bush to come at the news, without venturing to ask a plain question, or mention any name directly. He was in momentary expectation of Aline's being pronounced; and was marvelling much, what could have made Catrine in her reproach to Jeanneton prefer the epithet "poor" to the name of the detested Caribert—that double-faced epithet, which, in its actual palpable sense, is nine times out of ten a title of contempt; but in its figurative meaning always a type of compassion. Its application in the present case could be only in the latter way; and it was a riddle not to be read by Claude's unassisted conjectures. While he was puzzling himself how to come at its meaning, the explanation burst upon him, in a manner at once shocking, and almost incredible to him.

"Dearest Claude," said Catrine, "you are then indeed returned to stay with us for ever?"

"With you for ever, dear Catrine, but not *here*."

"Surely you do not persist in abandoning our old house?" said Aimee.

"I do indeed, sister," sighed Claude.

"No, no," cried Catrine, in a gayer tone: "when you know everything you will not say so."

"Know everything—what can you mean?" asked Claude, rising, and his heart jumping, as he thought, to his throat.

"Tell us first all you have heard of us and your old friends, since you left home," said Catrine.

Heard!—Nothing—not one word, good or bad."

"What! not heard that Caribert?"—she was here interrupted by a piercing scream from Jeanneton, who had been nearest the door, and was looking half at her brother, and half out into the twilight. She threw herself upon his breast, crying "Save me, Claude!"—and while she entwined one arm round his neck, she made a violent effort to shut the door with the other. Claude still supporting her, tore it back upon its hinges, in the natural impulse that prompted him to face the danger, whatever it might be.

Straight before him, not ten paces distant, vacantly gazing at the group within the cottage, with hollow eyes and listless smiles, stood Caribert. His attitude and face were speaking evidences of a host of sufferings. The languid inertness of his form, and the marble coldness of his looks, struck Claude as perfectly shocking. At the first glance his heart's blood mounted high. When he gazed a moment it seemed to curdle in his veins.

The hurried confusion and almost unintelligible explanations which burst from the three sisters together, left Claude bewildered and amazed. He could not comprehend the mystery; and seemed

to have lost the sense of hearing. The figure before him moved away, and was followed at a short interval by another, which appeared to him the conjuration of magical deception. It was that of Aline, wrapped in her hood, kindly waving her hand, and sadly smiling, as she half distinguished the cottage inhabitants through the twilight. Claude doubted the reality of every thing around him and sat down in a chair to recover his scattered thoughts.

All his efforts to comprehend his sisters were exerted to meet their endeavors to explain, and he soon began really to understand the main features of their harrowing story. He had no time for reflection, and seemed capable at the moment of but one strong sensation—that of overwhelming horror at Caribert's loss of reason. When he rightly understood the purpose of Aline's continued devotion to the duty she had undertaken, he swore that he too would devote himself to the sacred charge, and full of the enthusiasm excited by such a cause, he flew from the cottage and followed the steps of Aline.—Her astonishment at seeing him by her side, may perhaps be imagined. She had taken him, in her imperfect passing glance, for the new lover who had succeeded the unfortunate Caribert in Jean-neton's favor. She received him with all the warmth of friendship founded on esteem; his appearance was a solace unlooked for and powerful; and as they slowly tracked together the homeward steps of the maniac, she related the details of what had passed; and he drew, from the affliction they created, full stores of hope that he was afraid to acknowledge to himself, much less breathe to her.

From that night till the one on which I met them, these admirable associates pursued the task they had voluntarily undertaken. In all the changes of their hapless patient (and he had had many, from sullen apathy to dangerous excess) they watched and followed him with unabating care. He had during this time one other short gleam of reason. It was but flitting, and seemed to leave him but more confirmedly lost; and the increasing violence which succeeded his relapse had only subsided, a few days before, into that treacherous calm, so like recovery as to deceive the sagacity of the doctors, and the hopes—shall I still call them so? Yes! the hopes of Aline and the expectations of Claude.

During all this time, Claude never ventured to speak of love.—There was no convention between him and Aline to lead to this forbearance. The subject of his passion was never mentioned. He tacitly loved on, but when he was with her it seemed to him as if it was not love that led him to her presence. He fancied that he looked on her as something beyond his reach; and that the solemn service which they performed together, opposed a kind of religious bar to the indulgence of such notions. It was when he was away from her that he knew himself rightly, and found that mixed with all the purity of his attentions to Caribert, was the passionate attachment—that rock on which their friendship and their happiness had split.

Of the results to be expected, Claude had but vague and most unfixed notions. He was so much afraid of the subject, that he never essayed to put his feelings or his thoughts in train, but went on, thankful for the blessing of being near Aline, and shuddering at

each new turn of Caribert's disorder, whether it indicated a chance of his recovery or the probability of his death.

Moinard, with his eye steadily fixed on the main point of his desires, the marriage of Aline with Claude, gave every possible chance to the latter for establishing himself in her affection as firmly as he was fixed in her regard; and scrupulously acceded to every wish of his daughter connected with her attendance on Caribert. He meanwhile prayed fervently to all the saints within the limited scope of his religious knowledge, for the death of the maniac, which alone could lead to the chance of his object being accomplished.

Jeanneeton continued very merrily her flirtation with Simon: thought him an excellent substitute for Caribert; and gave but little attention to the more serious proceedings of her neighbors.

Having thus brought matters down to the state in which I first introduced this story to my readers, I shall now give up my character as a second-hand relater of other people's narrative, and resume, in a new chapter, the account of what came fairly under my own observation.

CHAPTER X.

As Moinard, Claude, Ranger, and myself arrived at the foot of the mountain, on the summit of which, it will be recollected, we were stationed at the close of Chapter IV. the full beauty of a splendid summer morning was displayed before us. The mists had all left the plains and settled high on the mountain tops, except here and there a gauze-like remnant skimming transparently across their sides, like a solitary ghost that had outstaid the hour of its earthly visiting. The clouds which we now left high above us, opened in many places a downward passage, for the sunbeams, which spread far and wide across the country, lit up by the snow-covered peaks with increased brightness, threw gayer tints upon the dark green of the pine-forests, and flung their broad and golden streaks upon the embrowned herbage of the soil.

We traversed the plain in the direction of the Pic du Midi, which elevated its proud head in isolated majesty, and stood out far in front of the interminable chain of hills, as a giant-commander before the line of his wide-stretched legions. We began the ascent on the eastern side, keeping in the direction of Lake Escoubous to the left, and intending, if we should not succeed in discovering Caribert about its borders, to mount towards the precipice, and cut into the path that terminates the road from Grippe.

Just as we began to wind up the hill, a herd of about a couple of dozen izards swept abruptly round its southern elbow, and rushed at

the top of their speed down towards the plain. Their beauty of form and color might be given by a skilful painter; but what pencil could convey a notion of their inimitable grace, their agility and speed, as they darted along the levels, sprang across the huge masses of granite and cleared at a bound the rivulets which flowed across their way! Moinard and Claude added to their alarm by loud shouts, which echoed in a hundred reverberations from the hills, and threw into equal confusion the numerous eagles which hovered slowly about the summits, as if to guard the desolation below.

A few paces more gave us an extended view towards the south, of several leagues of the valleys between us and the principal chain of hills. The plains were for the most part bleak and barren, but were dotted by occasional scraps of wood and bramble. In one of these an izard hunter was ranging with his two dogs. He carried a staff in his hands, by the assistance of which he sprang across every obstruction. He was bare-headed; his gun was slung at his back; his jacket open; sandals on his feet, and a buglehorn hanging at one side. When the dogs took too wide a range he recalled them by winding his horn, and they (much no doubt to the annoyance of Ranger's well-formed habits) answered by yells, almost as much in tune as the mountain echoes which gave back the bugle's sounds. While I observed the picturesque scenery thus presented to me, an unlucky izard started from his bed among the shrubs, the dogs pursued, the hunter levelled his gun—but as I have already thrown the whole scene into some twenty or thirty lines of description, I may as well transcribe them here to fill up a page or so—

THE IZARD HUNTER.

Light o'er the lea the hunter bounds
With buoyant heart and brow unclouded—
Shrill answer to his bugle's sounds
The hill, with its peak in thick mists shrouded,
And the baying of the hounds.
He quickly clears the deep ravine.
Treads with firm foot the blue-flowered heath;
But leaps those spots of treacherous green
Which hide the shaking moss beneath,
Like life's allurements veiling death.
Borne on his sharp-piked staff he springs,
While the dogs thro' the brambly scrubwood rushing,
Fleetly lap the rock stream gushing:
And eager snuff the quarry's trace,
And yelp the music of the chase—
And keenly search as their master sings,
And his lowland cares to the rough breeze flings.
The game is up, and away he goes!
The izard springs from his leafy lair—
Cleaves, with a panting plunge, the air—
A moment breathes, and backward throws
One glance at the yelling foes.
An eagle from her crag-formed nest,
Spies the brief chase, and onward soars,
Flaps her way o'er the mountain's breast,
And fancies food for the hungry nest.

She marks from her height the fusil's flash,
 The death-struck izard tumbles down,
 And blood-drops blush on the rock-weeds brown.
 Straightway she stoops with rapid dash—
 But the hunter's stern fixed glance fearing,
 In gloomy grandeur upwards steering,
 Sweeps slowly through heaven's solitude,
 To hover again o'er her screaming brood.

"Ah! there goes Louis Lizier!"—exclaimed Claude, as we first got a view of the hunter. "Woe betide the animal at which he levels his rifle!" "I know it," added he, as the izard fell mortally wounded, "he never missed his mark."

"He must be a sure shot to hit an izard at full speed," said I.

"Aye, that he is; and the flash of his gun is not a surer forerunner of death, than he is of the hunters. We shall have the whole body of them presently. Louis always goes out scout, to mark the prey and pick down the stragglers from the izard herds. He is a keen sportsman and found of venison. Hark! I hear the cry of the *Battea*. Come on quickly, Sir,—we shall see them down in the wood from yonder point."

I pressed forward accompanied by Moinard, who though no sportsman by profession, had sometimes followed the chase, and seemed in the animation of the present scene to have forgotten entirely the business that brought him with us across the hills. When we reached the spot mentioned by Claude, a new gorge was opened to us, stretching to the right, thickly covered with wood, rising to the westward, a gently-sloping mountain, and bounded on the east by the frightful wall of that precipice, many hundred feet high, down which old Larcole had been plunged. When I looked upwards and marked the edge over which I had hung the morning before, and then cast my eyes down into the rocky bottom, where the old hunter had lain dead with his fierce and shaggy foe, I forgot for an instant, in the shock caused by the view, the more immediate objects of my curiosity.

My attention was however quickly recalled, by the loud shouts which issued from the wood below, the blowing of horns, the barking of dogs, and the report of musket shots. From the smoke which rose up through the pine trees, after each discharge, I could ascertain that the party which was scouring the wood advanced in a tolerably regular line, and in the direction of the spot on which we stood.—Moinard threw himself carelessly down and gazed upon the scene. Ranger bounded, wagged his tail and addressed many supplicating looks to me, enquiring the meaning of this barbarous proceeding.—Claude loosened his gun from its sling, grasped it in his hands, and looked with a piercing glance, as if watching for his prey. I drew out the charges of shot with which I had loaded on starting from Moinard's house, and threw a ball into each barrel, with somewhat of the compunctious visitings which I always felt, in putting my trusty and well-beloved Joe Manton to such unfair and unworthy trials. But in traversing the mountains, my principal game was to be brought down with ball;—and the confession of my remorse is, after all, only com-

prehensible to my English brother sportsmen, who will, I trust, pardon the offence against *home* practices.

The rapid advance of the hunters was made evident by those telegraphic announcements sent up through the trees—noisy reports ending in smoke, and to which I have since known many parallels in news from very nearly the same neighborhood. In a few minutes three or four hares bounded out of the wood and fled across the plains in defiance of the pursuit of the izard hunters' dogs. Presently two bears emerged from their concealment, and were soon followed by a third with a wolf who sought like them a refuge from the approaching foes. All these fugitive savages made, by a common instinct, towards a rocky hollow about three hundred yards in front of the wood, and close to the foot of the mountain towards which we were gradually inclining.

Lizier, who recognized Claude, hallooed out to us to descend still faster, to hem in the enemy and prevent the possibility of his escape. The wolf trotted on briskly from the wood, and soon crouched down in the concealment of the brambles and high fern that grew among the rocks. The bears advanced to the hollow with ferocious growlings and steady gravity of pace, that marked them insensible, or indifferent to danger.

The dogs and hunters now began to appear. The former to the amount of about twenty, showed their good training by stopping on the verge of the wood. They all lay down or stood still, and many of them rolled in the heath, refreshing themselves after their fatigue, and gaining fresh vigor for the coming contest.

The hunters all paused as they came out, and seemed to pay implicit obedience to the movements of a young man who soon appeared about the centre of the line, and who was distinguished from his comrades by a red scarf tied across his shoulder, and a small flag of the same color, which he waved in various motions suited to the commands he meant to convey.

"Ha! ha!" said Claude, I see they have chosen Simon Gouille-teaux captain of the day. I hope he may have good sport."

"I trust he may," replied I, "for your sister's sake. There is some profit in being leader of a successful party, isn't there?"

"Why, yes, Sir; there's a whole skin to himself, if they kill an odd number of bears, and a *petit ecu* for every wolf, besides his share of the profits coming from the commune."

"Oh, then we must do our best to help the cause—it will all be for Jeanneton's benefit you know."

"Not a bit of it, Sir,—Simon is too much of a rake not to spend every franc he gains in one foolish way or other;—but he's a good hearted lad for all that, and marriage will settle them both one day, for she's to the full as unsteady as he."

The hunters had now fairly emerged from the wood. I counted them, fourteen; and there was something irregularly martial and fiercely picturesque in their whole appearance and manner. They looked, every one, as if they had been, or ought to have been soldiers. There was an air of rude uniformity in their leathern doublets, that gave a notion of discipline, and something extremely inspiring in

their ardent gestures and bold attitudes. About half a dozen carried fusils; the rest were armed with short spikes, and the accessories formerly mentioned in my description of the accoutrements of the unfortunate Laroche, and his still more ill-fated son.

Lizier and Claude soon informed the party of the good sport they had driven before them. They seemed all highly exhilarated by the intelligence, and quickly prepared for the attack. The Captain divided his party, moving towards the left with six, and ordering the others to advance straight forward, that they might commence the onset at two sides of the hollow; Claude, Lizier, and myself, being already on the rising ground opposite the wood, up which they did not think of the prey attempting to escape; while an opening was clearly left to the southward to facilitate their flight, and leave a space for the gunsmen to fire without danger to the party.

The dogs stooped down and crept onwards, as their masters silently advanced; and when the approaching footsteps sounded within hearing of the wolf, I saw the ruffian throw his ears back, lay his head close to the earth, and show all the cunning air and posture of a fox, but none of the ferocity of his kind. The bears huddled together into the centre of the hollow; and there was something extremely ludicrous in the air of profound consultation of this heavy-headed junta, and the associations it brought to my mind, of ministers, monarchs, and the Lord knows what.

Arrived at the edges of the hollow, the huntsmen set up a loud cry to rouse the bears into fury, and force them to quit their vantage ground among the broken rocks and shrubs. The bears growled, and foamed, and moved round briskly in evident irritation, but they did not stir from their position. The wolf rose up, and, as he made himself seen, was assailed by fierce shouts. Three of the dogs were let loose upon him, and he immediately advanced towards the open space. He looked round about him at the levelled guns and determined looks of his adversaries; and then, whether from chance or calculation I do not pretend to decide, he made a sudden rush to the leftward, bounded from the hollow, sprung up the hill, and took full speed towards us. Two ineffectual shots were fired at him from the opposite side, and the bullets whizzed close to us. No more could be fired from that quarter without exposing us to great risk, and a waving downward of the Captain's flag prohibited the attempt.

"Now, Lizier, now! give it to him, give it to him!" was the cry from every voice. Lizier, who stood about one hundred yards below us, obeyed the call, took a steady aim, fired, and missed him. Claude, burning with anxiety to outdo this celebrated marksman, levelled his gun, and struck a hundred fragments from a block of granite, over which the fugitive made a bound at the instant he pulled the trigger. It remained for me to try my hand, and I certainly had fair play. Both Lizier and Claude had fired at the runaway obliquely; but when I covered him he was dashing straight up the hill before me. I felt that I had, as well as my own reputation, the honor of Old England and Joe Manton on the tip of my finger. I let Lupus get off to about sixty paces, when I fired. The ground was ploughed up right under his belly—he galloped on unhurt, but

his fate was not to be eluded. He had not gone ten yards farther when I pulled the second trigger. The ball hit him right along the back, shattered the spine, and went clear through his neck. He tumbled over five or six times, and lay stretched dead upon the hill.

A shout of joy was his requiem from the whole party, with one exception. That was Lizier, who looked sullenly on, and hammered his flint with an air of utter vexation. As I reloaded, Ranger looked up for permission to go forward to examine the defunct. I gave him a consenting nod, and he cantered off, but returned with his tail between his legs, after a single glance, frightened at the grim look of the dead enemy. Simon Guilloteaux jumped with joy, threw up his straw hat into the air and vociferated many compliments to me and my Joe Mantou.

I remarked to Claude that his friend Lizier did not seem to partake in Simon's pleasure.

"I don't wonder at that, sir," said he; "his black spiteful heart is sore wounded: it was he who denounced Caribert as his father's murderer."

My disquiet at the sight of the fellow, when I heard this, took away for a moment my enjoyment in the attack on the bears, which immediately followed my feat of skill. But the vigor of the combat quickly absorbed my attention. Men and dogs advanced with equal courage, and their superiority soon decided the affair. The bears were all killed after a hard struggle; and with only the loss of two dogs, who fell in the first onset, and a few slight scratches and bruises, distributed in fair proportions between the captain and four of his most ardent associates.

The work of slaughter lasted but a short time; and when the last of the bears was despatched, a loud concert of triumph bust forth in shouts, blowing of horns, firing of guns and barking of dogs. The hunters began to drag the carcasses up into the plain; the wolf was brought down and thrown beside his companions in death; and each combatant began to examine the various wounds of the victims, recognizing those he had himself inflicted; the whole party chatting over the rapid events of the battle.

There was certainly somewhat, beyond any thing I had imagined or can describe, of savage interest in the scene. I felt a momentary repugnance to the very thought of fox or hare-hunting, and made an inward vow against the tamer sports of the field, which I have kept, just in the manner of a poet who forswears publishing, or a coquette who renounces flirtation after the first disappointment.

CHAPTER XI.

I perceived, in the mean time, that Claude's observation had wandered from what was passing before us, in search of an object not evident to his eyes, but occupying all his mind. He looked out anxiously towards the lake; and after exchanging some rude civilities with the hunters, and making some inquiries concerning Caribert, of whom they all declared they had seen nothing, he and I proceeded in that direction; Moinard taking the way back to Mount Arbizon, to look after his flock and its shepherd.

Before we had advanced twenty paces in our several routes, Claude stopped short, called out suddenly, "There he goes, by Heaven," or rather an oath equivalent to that—and darted at full speed towards a corner of the wood through which the hunters had driven their prey. Moinard heard the exclamation, and turned round; the hunters saw Claude's rapid movement, and looked out anxiously; and I with emotions not easy to depict, stained my sight to catch a view of the unfortunate maniac, whose fate had so highly excited my curiosity and interest.

I gazed some time in vain, and had I not depended much on the accuracy of Claude's keen and accustomed eye I should have supposed him to have been mistaken. He continued his rapid pace; and I at length observed a man rise from among the underwood which was intermixed with a group of low fir trees; and from his tottering gait as he advanced towards the hunters, I concluded (and my suppositions were afterwards confirmed) that he had fallen down from weakness at the moment he was observed by Claude.

This was indeed Caribert. I must not attempt to analyze my own sensations as I gazed on the deplorable figure he presented. The scene around me, the *precipice*, and the slaughtered bears weltering in their blood, were combinations well suited to such an apparition. But his appearance, lank and haggard, his beard apparently the growth of several weeks, his dark hair matted with weeds and damped by the dew, his vestments torn against the branches and roots through which he had all night wandered; his worn-out me in and frame exhausted—all this was unexpected and altogether shocking.

I could not help figuring to myself, before I saw him, a robust and active young madman, of terrible aspect and ferocious purpose. The first impression made by his appearance was that of enfeebled age, unqualified to sustain a struggle with a child. It was a subject over which a moralist or a hero might have equally wept without reproach. There was not one of the hunters who did not show such symptoms of compassion as their rough natures admitted; and even Moinard, who stood beside me, was touched by the woful picture on which we gazed.

Claude was soon joined by two or three of the hunters, and as they advanced together towards Caribert, I observed Aline following on foot the steps of the wanderer, until she saw the group that approached to meet him; when she stopped and turned into the wood, as if abashed by the presence of such a company. I pointed her out to her father, who immediately descended towards her, and passing by the skirt of the hollow near which the hunters were scattered, soon made himself observed by her, and soon received her morning embrace. I could not rest alone, a distant spectator of the scene, but descended the level ground, along which Caribert was slowly moving.

As Claude and the others got near him, he spoke, but I could only distinguish the sound of his hoarse and hollow voice: the words were inarticulate. The group soon surrounded him, and it was not long before I joined them. I made my way close up to him, and strove to catch his incoherent and scarcely audible discourse. Nothing can be more discursive or unconnected than what he said. He had evidently lost all remembrance of the faces about him; and though his rambling thoughts were full of fancies connected with his former companions, he scarcely in one instance applied them rightly. The only one indeed which bore any direct meaning, even in a superstitious sense, was when addressing Louis Lizier; starting off from some rhapsody which no one comprehended, his mind seemed to catch a sudden glimpse of the past, and he turned with great vivacity to Lizier, who leaned upon his fusil close by, and regarded him with a lowering gaze.

"You know it, don't you?" said he, briskly seizing Lizier by the arm, "You saw it? You watched them while they fell, and heard the crash down through the trees and rocks, and listened to their groans! It will be said I pushed them over, but you will hurl perdition on the heads of these false villains—I depend on you."

The fierce energy with which this was uttered, the conscience-struck expression of Lizier's countenance, and the astonished looks of the surrounding men, were most striking. The listeners seemed to consider the random words of the maniac as the utterance of an oracle, and there was something awful attached to their coincidence with fact, from the superstition that believes a madman's recognition of one who has injured him to be a sure announcement of a violent death to such a person.

It was clear to me that Caribert did not recognize the culprit whom he thus addressed. But neither Lizier nor his comrades were of my opinion, and the awe with which they all seemed impressed, was a fine lesson of human weakness, and not a slight proof of the value of superstition for the government of that class over which it is the best, because the most natural instrument. I deliberately say this at the risk of drawing down the censures of all the Theophilanthropists upon me.

The blood which covered some of the hunters now caught the observation of Caribert. The lassitude and fatigue by which he at first appeared bowed down, gave way all at once to a sudden burst of animation. He snatched a spear from the hand of one of the men next to him, and brandishing it over his head, he shouted hoarsely, "To

the chase, to the chase!" His emaciated limbs shook with nervous agitation, and he hurried on through the files formed by the hunters, who fell back as he advanced, and offered no obstacle to his progress. As he rushed on, shouting and waving the spear, his eye fixed on one of the slaughtered bears—he paused an instant, and then with a furious expression of countenance, and a violent effort at utterance which his hoarseness rendered vain, he flung himself on the body of the dead animal. He took it up in his arms with a strength that appeared gigantic—and dashing it then furiously against the ground, he seemed at once to lose all power, and fell down upon it, exhausted and apparently lifeless.

He was completely besmeared with the blood, and was altogether the most appalling object I had ever beheld. He was raised up quite unresistingly by his friends. Aline and Moinard approached, and she gave directions concerning him, which were promptly obeyed. A rude litter of pine branches covered with heath was quickly constructed, and the poor wretch laid upon it and borne on the shoulders of four of his companions. Three others walked beside it, with Claude, Aline and myself; and while she held one of his hands, and kept steady her hood which she threw over him, we occasionally relieved each other in the task of carrying him. Guilloteaux, with the remainder of the hunters, staid behind to secure the spoils; Moinard finally set out for his destination, and Lizier was observed to steal silently off with his dog into the wood.

As we advanced in the direction of Madame Larcole's cottage, our unfortunate burthen raved wildly, but with great exhaustion, and evidently with a pleased impression on his mind. We could collect from his scattered phrases that he fancied he had killed the bear, and that it was the identical one which had destroyed his father. This idea of having revenged his parent's death, and redeemed his own character, seemed to effect him powerfully, yet mildly. The easy exercise of the litter harmonized with the subdued tone of his feelings, and the languor of his frame; and he soon dropped into a slumber which continued till we reached his house.

During our march Aline told us of her discovering him after day-break, lying almost fainting in the wood near which I had first observed him. She had revived him with the simple remedy of some snow from one of those heaps which lie in the crevices of the hills, and which melting away little as the season advances, appear from a distance like straggling lambs that repose in the sheltered nooks of their wild pasture-grounds. He did not recollect her, but received her assistance calmly; and as soon as he recovered himself proceeded without any apparent object, wandering about, until he heard the shots fired by the hunters, and their shouts as they advanced. At these signals his nerves seemed new braced, and his mind inflamed afresh. He pushed forward with increased energy, following the well-remembered sounds of the chase; and at length entangling himself at each step of his hurried progress, he fell repeatedly, until with strength almost entirely exhausted, he reached the spot where Claude's quick glance perceived him. Aline was left behind in her pursuit. The intricacy of the wood had obliged her

to abandon her pony in the place where she first fell in with Caribert ; and from fatigue and agitation, she appeared very nearly as much in want of support as the helpless object of her care.

When, after a long and painful walk across the hills, we reached the term of our expedition, we were met by the poor mother. She told us, weeping, that she had been obliged to return from her attempt at pursuit, the evening before, almost immediately after Caribert had left the house ; for having lost sight of him it was in vain to continue it ; and that the young man who followed him, when Claude went across to Moinard's, had been equally unable to keep sight of him after nightfall. He had relinquished the attempt after some hours' efforts, and had, as soon as the morning dawned, returned to inform her : and then gone in search of Claude, in order to join him in a new attempt.

The poor old woman wept bitterly as she gazed on her son. She had, at first sight of his motionless form extended on the rude resemblance of a bier, believed him to be dead. Her expressions of sorrow, even on being assured of his existence, were heart-rending. She accused herself with unsparing invective as the cause of this desperate relapse, in not having better guarded him, and prayed a hundred times that death might snatch her from the observation of his misery and suffering. Yet he did not then appear to suffer much. He was quietly laid on his bed, and seemed insensible to pain. His fever was, notwithstanding, most violent ; his skin was burning hot, and his lips and mouth parched up. A couple of old neighbors soon joined the mother in the care of the patient ; the doctor was sent for to the town six miles distant ; and every measure in the mean time taken to give such relief as the innocent herbal preparations of nature's pharmacopeia afforded.

He talked incessantly, always in the same strain of satisfaction at having revenged his father's death ; and the old women, one and all, pronounced that the happy turn of feeling caused by this belief, must operate wonders for his cure. I was standing close by his bed when the ancient triumvirate pronounced their joint opinion ; Claude and Aline were near me, and I watched them well. He colored red, and then turned pale, laid hold of a chair that was beside him, cast his eyes down, and appeared to shrink from the observation which he looked conscious of having attracted. Whether he was shocked at the discovery he made of his own thoughts, or whether these were, or were not, of a nature so to affect him, it would be hard to say ; but I fancied I read the proofs of a first sensation of astonished disappointment, in the sentence of recovery pronounced on Caribert, and an after-feeling of remorse at the self-acknowledgment of such a sensation.

A thousand pages of explanation could not describe the appearance of Aline. There never was a more pure display of virtue and benevolence. There was an utter absence of every sign by which selfishness betrays itself ; unless, indeed, selfishness may exist in the sublime devotion by which one mind identifies itself with another, and makes the joys and sorrows of a beloved object its own.

The remainder of the party who watched round Caribert's bed.

received with a profound expression of pleasure the sybil-like announcement of his progressive recovery ; I know not exactly what my own sensations were ; but so deeply interested was I in what I considered the real welfare of Aline, so highly did I regard Claude as connected with it, so little had I personally seen of Caribert, and consequently so faint was my attachment to him in comparison with the others, that I am afraid I did not fully sympathise in the warm hopes and happiness by which I was surrounded. I had looked upon him from the first moment as lost to the world. He seemed to bear the stamp of death on his debilitated frame ; and I thought I saw a sepulchral glassiness in his eye, which shone like the cold reflection of a mirror lighted by a midnight lamp.

We persuaded Aline to take possession of Madame Larcole's bed, and get a few hours repose ; and I with the rest of the party retired from the house to share, in front of it, such refreshment as our flasks and havresacks afforded. That business settled, Claude turned his steps towards home, and proposed to me to accompany him. I was glad of the opportunity to see his sisters, and still more so to have some conversation with him alone on the subject of Caribert's expected recovery.

I began this latter topic by expressing my doubts of it. Claude shook his head with an involuntary expression which seemed to say, 'It is too true.' He did not quite utter the words, but from his reply it was easy to see how perfectly the natural desire of his own happiness had got the mastery over romantic feelings for the unfortunate sufferer who had so deeply injured it. He said it was a shocking thing to wish for the death of any one ; that Aline's well-being was every thing to him, that he was willing to make any sacrifice of his own hopes to ensure her peace of mind ; but I saw through all this that poor Claude, perhaps, without knowing it, was any thing but cordially gratified by the prospect of Caribert's recovery. Seeing this, and my opinion (whatever my wishes might be) strongly inclining to a belief that he lay on his death-bed, I told Claude that I thought there was but little chance for him. He again shook his head, "God knows, Sir" said he "it will be all for the best, happen what will ; but if Mariette, the fat old woman in the hood and blue boddice pronounces for his recovery, it is as sure as the day that shines on us."

"She certainly said so," replied I, "and repeated it a moment before we left the house. You have an opinion of her skill?"

"She is the wonder of the whole country, Sir. She never went wrong either as midwife or physician ; and has more knowledge in her little finger, than Doctor Bourmont in his big head. But who have we here ? added my companion, looking down a little ravine on my left hand. I looked in the same direction, and perceive, to my utter surprise, my dandy countryman, (whom I had supposed snugly smoring in Aline's bed,) toiling up the rugged bank of the ravine, and piloted by no other guide than my last night's friend, the goat-herd, who had much the appearance of one recovering from a debauch, without the assistance of hock and soda water. His protege, the dandy, looked all on fire. His face was red as his head ; his eyes

were blood-shot; I am sure that could his feelings have been subjected to visual examination, they would have appeared flame-colored. He swore like a trooper, and burst through the briars with terrible explosions of indignation; but made just about as much way towards the top as could be expected from a living image of the stone siayphus. He was really a lamentable spectacle. The place was quite irrigated by the springs, which had burst out and flowed down the sides of the hill, and he laboured through a bed of weeds and mud. On every bramble he passed, up or down, he left a remnant of his coat, as naturally as the sheep who were in the habit of going the same rough path. His white pantaloons were slit into an accurate copy of the slashed breeches of other days. His Spanish leather boots were torn to fitters. He had irretrievably lost his hat; and his smart frock-coat having been totally despoiled of its skirts, was by this summary process converted into a nondescript kind of vestment between a jacket and a spencer, most horribly unbecoming to his lengthy limbs and their unfleshy appurtenances

"The suburbs of his jacket being gone,
He had not left a skirt to sit upon."

"My good sir," cried I, offering him my hand, as with desperate contortions he looked upwards for the twentieth time, "what could have induced you to take such a path?"

On hearing the sound of his own original mother tongue, which, in this unguarded moment I inconsiderately spoke, he made a full stop; and formed with his wide-stretched legs and the ground he stood on, a gigantic figure of an equilateral triangle, his body standing up in a right line from its utmost apex.

"Heaven and earth!" cried he at length, "are you an Englishman? I'll be d——d if I did not take you last night for a frog-eater."

Recollecting myself immediately, and being resolved not to acknowledge our relationship (which was somewhat more distant than he imagined,) I replied with a shrug—

"I speak a little English, saer."

"Why you had none of that cursed *dis* and *dat* accent just now," said he, eyeing me keenly.

"I speak not moosh, saer," said I, with a grimace.

"Umph!" muttered he, "well, give me your hand, any how, and lug me out of this infernal morass."

I tugged hard, and he struggled bravely, but he had stuck ankle-deep, and his long spurs held him as fast at anchor as a seventy-four gun ship off the North Foreland. With the help of Claude (the goatherd being quite unfit for service from violent fits of laughter,) I at length succeeded in digging out the Dandy; and we dragged him up to the bank all in a foam, rivers of sweat pouring down his hollow cheeks, and dripping along his mustachios, which were thus brought into two fine points below his chin, and performed their only possible office of use or ornament, as perspiration conductors.

After a proper proportion of puffing and blowing, necessary to put him into wind, his first object was to inflict due chastisement on

the grinning goatherd, who, he swore, had led him to this defile, to have him conveniently robbed and murdered, and whose malice spoke plainly in his looks. Away, therefore, he darted at full speed after the youngster, who seeing his intention, took to his heels, and led him for five minutes as pretty a little chase as could be, in a circle of about fifty yards diameter, twisting and turning from his open-mouthed and long-legged pursuer, with the adroitness of a hare baffling the greyhound on the Yorkshire wolds. It was certainly good sport; and the Dandy himself could not help laughing, when, quite done up, he was obliged to fling himself down, and the young dog came smiling up and demanded payment for his services. Native generosity extinguished the Dandy's remaining ire; and the goatherd received in his outstretched hand the flat slap of a piece of money, that made him stare as if he would have swallowed it.

I saw that Claude was now desirous of getting to his home; and my anxiety lying more in a retrograde direction, I suffered him to set off alone, saying that I would take care to put my coatless countryman upon the right track for the recovery of his pony. Claude, therefore, set out; promising to be at Caribert's cottage in the evening; and the disbanded guide trotted away joyously on nearly the same route.

When we were left to ourselves, my new companion poured out his complaints in no milkiness of mood. He swore that the Spaniards had stolen his horse, and that Moinard was leagued with them in the theft. This was proved, he said, beyond a doubt, by his absconding during the night; but was nothing in comparison to the villainous bill of charges, which he left ready made out with Manette, to be presented as soon as he was stirring in the morning. The items of this account being rather curious specimens of mountain orthography as well as imposition, I shall give a transcript of it here for the benefit of my readers, faithfully taken and done into English, from the bit of white-brown paper on which it was scribbled, in my friend Moinard's most-difficultly-to-be-decyphered scrawl.

| <i>Memoirs pr. M. l'Angle.</i> | | <i>Translation.</i> | |
|--|------------------|--|------------------|
| | <i>fr. c.</i> | <i>English Gentleman's Bill.</i> | <i>fr. c.</i> |
| Lis | 5 0 | Bed | 5 0 |
| Ganard pr. con soupait | 4 50 | Duck for his supper | 4 50 |
| Fromage id | 25 | Cheese do. | 25 |
| Pin heart let id | 1 75 | Bread, butter, milk, do | 1 75 |
| Amulette id | 2 0 | Omelette, do | 2 0 |
| Vin 3 bouts | 3 0 | Wine, three bottles | 3 0 |
| Quasi | 1 25 | Coffee | 1 25 |
| Au d' Vis avec Mesars. lex } Espanaules } | 7 0 | Brandy with the Spanish } gentlemen } | 7 0 |
| Chavai, foin avanine | 3 0 | Horse's hay and oats | 3 0 |
| | <u>fr. 27 75</u> | | <u>fr. 27 75</u> |

I endeavored to appease the Dandy, who confessed that (on reflecting that such travellers as he formed the only harvest of the poor

mountaineers, and must, therefore, expect be cut down without mercy) he did not care much for paying a guinea or two for a day's sport, that few people saw so much of a country at so cheap a price ; and in fact, that he would have been well satisfied, and in very good humor after all his losses, but for the blackguard robbery committed upon him in the person of his pony.

On this tender point I soon tranquilized him, by assuring him of the animal's safety, answering for the truth of Moinard's assertion that his daughter had rode him away in search of her lover ; and by finally pointing out the cottage, where both daughter and lover were at that very moment.

"There, are they ?" cried he, "then, by the Lord, Monsieur, I'll go and have a peep at them."

I remonstrated on the score of his tattered appearance, and recommended his accompanying me to Moinard's to recover his pony and set off for Bagneres, the place whence he came. To this he objected, assuring me that although he had lost the skirts of his coat, he still had the pockets of his pantaloons, and wherewithal in them to make him welcome wherever he went, and that probably he had the will as well as the means, to heal the heart-sores of the girl and her sweet heart. Upon this hint I turned with him towards Caribert's lowly dwelling ; and though I did not think very highly of the efficacy of his remedy for the case in question, I did not fail to cultivate the kind feelings which I saw spontaneously rising through the rough soil of his independant spirit.

At Madame Larcole's he was not gratified by a sight of either Caribert or Aline. They both slept soundly ; but the old woman made her appearance ; and the Dandy was so touched by the picture I had sketched of the distresses around him, that he began counting down his Napoleons to the wonder-stricken mother so fast, that I was really obliged to hold his hand, seeing that his heart was outstripping the prudence with which all hearts ought to travel side by side. Seven or eight of these golden gifts remained in the firmly-shut hand of Madame Larcole, whose fingers seemed to close as naturally upon them, as the feelers of some animals fasten on their food. But as her hand closed her heart opened, from some occult nervous action, I suppose, and she began the expression of her gratitude in terms which the Dandy was too sensitive to endure. I saw very plainly that he did not want thanks, and he begged of me to hurry off with him towards Moinard's, that he might escape from the trouble of receiving praises and blessings. We set off accordingly, and I was really so much impressed with a favorable opinion of him, that I could no longer resist acknowledging my country. I got out of the scrape of my having imposed myself on him for a Frenchman, by telling him it was my object to be thought so while I travelled in these wild parts. He was too well satisfied at finding that I came from so near home with him, to feel any annoyance on the score of my harmless deceit, and threw out many jocose hints as to my motives, which it is unnecessary to repeat.

He marched manfully with me to Moinard's, notwithstanding that his boots and his silk stockings were fairly worn from his feet. He

was a fine proof of what good mettle can do in these cases ; and he disdained to own himself knocked up when he arrived. We beguiled the way by various efforts to be agreeable to each other. At his request, I threw into the rough imitation formerly given to the reader, the sense of the song sung by the Spaniards. He in his turn confessed himself a bit of a geologist. I looked amazingly profound and marbly, as if I had been a chip of the same block, as he avowed his great disappointment in not having been able to pursue his search after Schistus, and Euphodite, and Thonschiefer, and Quadersandstain—and heaven knows how many other varieties, of which I was only puzzled to know how he could remember the names, or who could have invented them.

Arrived at the cottage, we got from Moinard a straw hat and an old cloak wherewith to cover his raggedness, and for which he paid double their original value ; he then discharged his bill, mounted his pony ; squeezed my hand ; gave a hearty dawn or two to all mountain districts and roughtish mountaineers ; and set off in a gentle canter towards Bagneres—the tattered remains of one boot and its brass spur trailing upon the road, like the ill-fastened drag-chain of a stage-coach.

CHAPTER XII.

I passed the remainder of the day with Moinard, talking over the events of the morning, and collecting from him many of the particulars which I have already woven into my narrative of previous occurrences. I gave up my original plan of returning to Caribert's thinking that my presence would be but useless. I occupied the bed evacuated by my countryman ; my host, as usual on such occasions, turned into a pallet under one of the sheds ; and Mannette, in the natural course of promotion, crept between the blankets to which the night before she had served as a coverlid.

I never slept so soundly. The extreme fatigue of the last two days, the effects of a heavy supper, consisting chiefly of a ragout of lizard-flesh seasoned strongly with garlic, and the soporific qualities of two large glasses of brandy-and-water, all combined to hold me fast to my mattress, until late in the morning ; when I was aroused by a clatter in the kitchen, between Mannette, her eagle, and her lizard, who were all breakfasting together ; the clamorous demands of her two pets mingling with her shrill voice, which was going its ordinary course of hearty laughter.

I started up, opened my window, gazed out on the magnificent prospect of mountain scenery before me, and forgot, for a moment,

in contemplating nature on this grand scale, how much of human suffering was contained in the narrow compass of poor Caribert's cottage. Recalled to the train of thinking in which my nine hours' dreamless sleep had made so wide a gap, I was soon ready to join Moinard in a visit of enquiry to Madame Larcrole, both of us being anxious to know the state of her poor son, but not exactly from the same motives.

We started together and paid a passing visit to Claude's sisters, as I was curious to see the various persons connected with all I had been hearing so much about. Claude was gone off to the spot where all his hopes and fears were centered. The girls were all at home, neat and respectable, but differing in nothing from the homely inhabitants of the hills, excepting that Jeanneton had rather a more lively eye than the others, and a rosier tinge mantling in her dark brown cheeks. They appeared all in low spirits, and Catrine, the eldest, had some conversation in an under tone with Moinard, which seemed sensibly to disturb him.

He appeared anxious to quit the cottage, and soon after we had taken our leave, he told me that Claude, on his return home the night before from his second visit to Caribert, had announced that the doctor who had seen him coincided perfectly with the old women, that he was in a way of rapid recovery both of health and reason.

"Bad news that, Sir, both for Claude and me; and what a prospect for my poor girl!"

"Why let's see, Mr. Moinard," said I. "It is clear to me she is doatingly attached to this unfortunate Caribert. I know something of the human heart, and believe me, if he recovers, as they say he will, you may yet see your daughter very happy as his wife."

"Ah! never, sir, never—you don't know her heart, or her head either. Supposing even that he did quite recover, let me tell you that he has not a franc in the world, but the poor pittance he could make by his hunting."

"That consideration would not weigh much with Aline," said I. "But it weighs very heavy with me, let me tell you," retorted he quickly; "and she has promised me never to marry him."

"Well, well, my friend," replied I, "it is useless to guess at what may happen; but I recommend you to make up your mind for the chance of all these promises being broken."

"But suppose even," exclaimed he after a few minutes' thought,—"suppose even he shouldn't recover his wits, is there any chance of her marrying Claude?"

"Not the least," answered I, although it was clear the question was put to himself rather than to me.

"I think so too, said he with a heavy sigh; and we spoke no more till we crossed Madame Larcrole's threshold.

"Ah! this is kind of you, my dear Mr. Moinard," cried the old woman, receiving us at the door, and kissing her neighbor on either cheek—"very kind indeed, to come up and join in all our happiness." "How is Caribert getting on?" asked he, freeing himself gently from the arms of the mother.

"Miraculously well!" replied she. "He has had such a night as he

has not passed, poor fellow, for many and many a long month." "Indeed!" muttered Moinard. "Where is my daughter?"

"Here I am, my father," said Aline in a soft tone, stepping from the little inner room where Caribert lay, and giving me a smile as she passed. She had at this time an expression of countenance entirely new. It was a mixture of all that was most delightful in an ardent mind, benevolence, high hope, and gratitude to Heaven.

"How is he now, Aline?" asked Moinard, while she embraced him.

"Oh much, much better," replied she; "he advances, thank God! most rapidly; Doctor Bourmont has just been here, and expects every thing from the crisis that is now coming on, and so does Mariette. In two days more his fate will be decided: that is, his mental recovery will, please Heaven, take place. That view of the bear yesterday morning, and the blessed notion it inspired, is the date of all our hopes. Three days, they say, must pass before the positive change, because the moon will enter a new quarter then—only till the day after to-morrow! My dear father!" She here threw her arms again round her father's neck, and could not restrain her tears.

"Ah! Aline," said he, "it is a sad thing when that which makes a daughter weep for joy, is near bringing tears of sorrow into the eyes of her old father."

"My dearest father," exclaimed Aline, "think of the poor sufferer that lies in that little room."

"What!" said he—"and forget the fine fellow walking out there in the garden?" and he here pointed to Claude through the window.

The looks which kept time with this short colloquy, gave it a character of considerable eloquence and feeling. It ended here, for Aline softly withdrew herself from her father's embrace, and retreated towards the chamber of the invalid. Moinard walked out into the garden, to talk with Claude and keep up his spirits, in his rough way of giving condolence. I sought the old woman, in order to gather what I could as to the actual state of Caribert's mind. They had nothing new to communicate. He had continued in the same tranquil state in which I left him; and slept profoundly the whole day and night, which (I agreed with his nurses) was caused by an effort of nature to shake off the fever that had before oppressed him.

I asked if I might see him, and the permission was rapidly granted. I entered the room carefully; and saw Aline sitting on a chair near his bed, watching his placid countenance. He was still sleeping, and the smile on Aline's lips seemed caught from that which played round his; and as far as might be judged from the expression of a face, with eyes closed, and almost concealed by his beard, his mind in its dawning state, was revelling in happy fancies.

After some time I joined Moinard and Claude in the garden, and the former told me the subject of their conversation. It consisted of resolutions on the part of Claude, met by dissuasion from Moinard, finally to arrange his former plans, and leave the neighborhood, when Caribert's recovery should be decidedly pronounced. Invited to give my opinion as an umpire between them, I thought it would be an act of unkindness to poor Claude, not to confess that I fully agreed with him. It was quite evident to my disinterested observa-

tion, that by delaying near Aline, he was only hoarding up new stories of misery for himself; for I saw enough of her to make up my mind, that as soon as Caribert recovered, the whole barrier against their union would give way, although it had been made up of materials a thousand times stronger than it was.

Announcing this opinion as calmly as I could, I saw that Claude was almost struck dumb with disappointment to find it tally with his own. He had wished to hear it, had appealed to me for it, and saw that it was just—but he hoped all the while to be deceived, and wished so without knowing it. But Moinard was at last beginning to come round to my way of thinking. He now, for the first time, confessed his fears that my opinion might be prophetic, and would have suffered much more keenly on the occasion than he did, had not a new light seemed to break in upon him all at once.

After some time spent in round-about ways of coming at the expression of this new notion, he exclaimed "Why you see, Claude, it is useless to repine, if Heaven ordains that you must give up your hopes of Aline. It is not every shot that brings down the bird we aim at. Don't be offended Claude, you are a sportsman, and you know that the net that lets one rabbit loose may hold another fast.—I know very well how truly you love the girl, and you know how much we all love you;—Mannette and myself, I might say, much better than Aline. Now I was just thinking that after a year's fretting or so, if the worst came to the worst, you might brighten up a little, and look about you again. I don't want to flatter you, Claude, but you know how I wished for you as a son-in-law, and who knows what may happen yet? It is not for me to praise my own child, and she's nothing but a child now, to be sure;—but a year will soon pass over, and then, you see, Mannette will be sixteen or thereabouts—and a nice comely lass I'll engage for it—and who knows what may happen, after all?" He here ventured to look up in Claude's face for the first time since he began his oration. Claude had stared at him all through it, without comprehending what he would be at; but discovering his meaning at length, he only shook his head and replied. "Mr Moinard, you don't know what you are talking about, or what I feel." With these words he walked away; but after one or two turns in the garden he rejoined us, announcing his intention of moving homewards. Moinard said he would accompany him, and explain what he meant on the road; they walked off together.

As for me, I was resolved to remain where I was, and I made the excuse of my want of occupation, and my wish to be of service in case a male assistant might in any way be wanted; for the men had all gone off, one by one, to their several homes. I was, in fact, much interested in the progress of Caribert's recovery; for independent of my delight in observing the movements of Aline's feelings, I felt the chance of remarking so extraordinary an occurrence, as a rare piece of good fortune to a person of my pursuits; for though not one of the faculty, I had followed the study of moral diseases wherever I chanced to find them—and where have I not?

I therefore loitered about the house; entered it occasionally; chatted with the old woman whose favor I had completely gained, in a great

measure, through the generosity of my countryman ; I conversed now and then with Aline, and watched the proofs of her beautiful disposition in her looks ; for she had not many words at command. While she, and I, and two of the old women, were taking our dinner of onion-soup and sallad, which every body ate with that fine appetite given us by hope, and the third nurse sitting by Caribert's bed, the trotting of Doctor Boarmont's horse announced his visit, and he soon alighted and entered the room. He was a short thin man, of extremely nervous appearance, and rather timid manner. He addressed himself respectfully to Mariette, and enquired the state of his patient. She replied that he went on marvellously well.

"Still sleeping?"

"Oh ! always, Sir—"

"So much the better—Don't you think so, Mariette?"

"To be sure I do, Doctor ; that's all he wants."

"Has he taken the ptisan?"

"Bless your heart, Sir, no ; how could he in his sleep?"

"Ah ! very true—let me see him."

We here all entered the sick room after the Doctor. He proceeded cautiously to feel his patient's pulse, first proclaiming his looks all for the better. While he felt the pulse with a most profound expression of countenance, Aline's eyes watched him with inexpressible eagerness.—When he withdrew his hand from Caribert's wrist and said "All's right, all's right, his fever is gone, and we may pronounce him quite well ;" she could no longer restrain herself, but uttering an exclamation of "thank God, thank God !" she burst into an hysteric laugh, and putting her hands to her face, she rushed out of the room.

At the sound of her voice, Caribert opened his eyes, stared wildly round, and said faintly, "That was Aline !" She heard his words—stepped back involuntarily into the room, and looked upon him. He fixed his eyes on her a moment, raised his hand towards her, and sunk again into sleep.

"It is enough," said the Doctor, "his reason has returned."

Aline sobbed almost to suffocation, the poor mother threw herself on her knees, and wept and prayed incoherently ; the old women chorused all she said, with loud expressions of felicitation ; I could not trust myself any longer in the infection of the general weakness, but accompanied the Doctor to his horse, held his bridle while he mounted, and performed the civilities of the house as he slowly trotted away. Seeing how much I made myself at home at the cottage, he begged of me to have great care taken that Caribert was kept perfectly tranquil, for although his recovery was certain it was not complete, and he might be driven into relapse by any premature agitation. In obedience to his prudentia! wishes, I returned to the attendant group, and they all agreed too fully with the Doctor's views, not to observe his orders strictly. It was arranged that they should watch one by one, regularly relieving each other ; but that no two were to be together in his room, to avoid the possibility of his being disturbed by conversation. His mother commenced her hour's watching, and was succeeded by the others with great regularity.

Old Mariette, who was looked up to as the great regulator of every thing concerning the patient, said that all went on well except one point. He breathed freely and slept soundly, but she did not like his not asking to drink. "If he would but take of that ptisan," said she emphatically, "it would act like magic on him!" Knowing the sacredness of devotion in which such diet-drinks are held by the French of all classes and distinctions, from the duchess down to the monthly nurse, and having myself neither predilection nor prejudice for or against those wishey-washy preparations, I paid but little attention to Mariette's anxiety.

Midnight approached; and at last (his mother sitting by his bedside) the patient put his hand to his mouth, as if he would drink. His mother reported this to Mariette. "Heaven be praised," cried she, "I have now no fears for him."

We all, who sat round the fire, participated in her satisfaction at this decisive sign. He took a deep draught, seemed much refreshed, and dropped again into sleep.

All being now well, Aline took her turn of watch. We had been the whole evening endeavoring to persuade her to lie down and sleep, but she could not, as long as Mariette had any doubt of matters going rightly. She had therefore rejected all our solicitations, and it now having come to her turn she persisted in fulfilling her duty. She accordingly entered the chamber, and took her station on the low chair beside her Caribert's bed. She went into the room cheerful and animated. I felt my heart throb with more than common pleasure at witnessing her happiness; and for a few short minutes I ran over in fancy the days of joy that I counted for her during the final recovery of her lover, and the bliss that I could not help believing destined for her as his faithful and beloved wife. The old women resumed their positions round the fire, and as I saw they were all, even their careful old Mariette, worn out with watching, I determined to take a stroll on the hill, and enjoy the silent beauties of the clear moonlight.

I walked thus, moralizing and poetizing for above an hour. True to that ever-working principle of egotism which leads the mind through all the labyrinths of analogy, back upon the home of its own selfishness, I ran over in that period the many recollections of my own chequered life, and planned and fancied matter enough for centuries to come. At last I began to feel chilly, and returned to the cottage. I entered cautiously, and found every thing wearing the same appearance as when I had walked out, the old women in their unvaried postures, and all sound asleep. I crept softly towards Caribert's room, and saw that poor Aline had also yielded to the influences which in hours of woe and apprehension she could so easily resist, but which this short season of her happiness had so effectually disposed her to receive. Tired nature had sunk; she had quitted the chair, and sat on the floor beside the bed, her head upon it, her eyes just closed, and her senses all locked up. I returned to the outer room, took the chair which the old crones had left vacant for me in front of the fire, and infected by the examples of repose around me, after a short time I too began to dose away, and finally slept like my companions.

Were I to live for those centuries over which my thoughts had before been wandering, I could never forget the sound that woke me

from that slumber—a shriek too horrid even to think of—or the sight that struck upon my eyes when I reached the place from whence the alarm proceeded. I rushed into Caribert's room, and thought I saw a spectre. It was Aline—standing upright on the spot where I had left her sleeping, her face bloodless, her eyes staring like the gaze of madness, her hands holding up close to her heart the hand of Caribert. Believing her under the influence of a horrid vision, I caught her by the arm and shook her forcibly, but she was not dreaming. I touched the hand which she held in hers, but it was stiffened in the colder clasp of death. Caribert was no more. He had died while she slept by him. She awoke from her imperfect slumber, was startled by the death-like silence around her, heard no breath, caught his hand, and found it icy and motionless.

Such was his quiet, yet with all the circumstances of hope—of certainty even—I must say his terrible death. Reflection may tell me, it is true, that he died happy, that his last hours were soothed by the notion of having revenged his father's fate; and one fitting moment sweetened by the sound of her voice whom he adored, and possibly by the shadowy glimpse of his recovered reason brightened by her sight. It is thus I wish my readers to reflect upon his exit; and I will not strive to strengthen any more painful impressions which may rise upon their minds. I therefore pass over the scene of suffering that followed this shocking and quite unlooked-for event. It is of little importance to know by what error of judgment the poor patient's disorder was misconceived, and its termination so sadly miscalculated. I shall leave his memory in the care of my readers and pass to other subjects.

Not being willing to deal too hardly with poor human nature in its moments of trial, I never wished to enter deeply into the secret of Claude's momentaneous feeling when he first heard of Caribert's death. God knows what the best of us might have felt in this case, during the temptation which such a surprise held out to selfishness. But I saw him very soon after. I saw him standing over his rival's death-bed—I saw him following him to his grave—a faithful portrait of disinterested sorrow. He wept over the friend of his youth, his companion and playmate, the man he had chosen for the husband of his sister, and the confidant of his own true passion. In this united character he mourned him bitterly; and I firmly believe that neither recollection nor resentment discoloured by one stain the picture he imaged to himself.

It may be well supposed that this genuine display of generosity and worth sank deep in Aline's heart. Would any of my readers have had her insensible to it, or have wished her to withhold its reward, and renounce the manifold chances of happiness which its participation offered to her sorrow-stricken heart? I wish, if there be any such, that they had seen her as I did about a year ago, with two fine boys hanging at her neck; her husband (the identical Claude) smiling beside them; and a look of sober contentment settled on the face that I had so often seen agitated by deep woe.

Jeanneton carried on a long flirtation with Simon Guilloteaux, and was two or three times half tempted to jilt him; but good fortune triumphed over her frivolity, for during one of her moment of

true feeling, apart from coquetry, he asked her seriously to marry him. She consented, was married, and is now, as Claude foretold, the steady and respectable wife of an honest, industrious man. Lixier, haunted by the superstitious presentiment of the fate which he believed decreed for him, threw himself as if by destiny into the way of a hundred dangers. He thus converted the chance-wandering of insanity into a prophecy. He escaped all native risks, but he joined the French army which marched for the invasion of Spain, and was almost the first man who fell, in the furtherance of an enterprise as dark and treacherous as he who thus became one of its earliest victims.

Mannette is, I hope, by this time, happily married to a young man of Sarancolin, for there was great talk of such an event when I last visited the hills. Jeanneton's sister remained at that time single, and they assisted their old friend Aline to make Claude's cottage and native spot so happy to him, that I verily believe he would not now exchange it for the whole side of any other mountain, though it were covered with gold and precious stones.

NOTE.

This story formed the first of the second series of "High-ways and By-ways." It was written with great rapidity, and under the excitement produced by the unlooked for success of the preceeding volumes. The reperusal of those pages forcibly recalls the delightful hours spent in their composition, when I flew to my work "like a French Falconer," with freedom and confidence, urged on by almost every inducement which could add a charm to authorship.

I occupied at the time the cottage residence in which Thomas Moore was my predecessor, on the hill called *la butte Coaslin*, close to Sevres and the Park of St. Cloud, overhanging the Seine, and within six miles of Paris, which paradise of cities I could see from my windows every morning, and where most of my evenings were spent. But not all—for the chateau just above me, the property of an intimate friend, formed a point of reunion for much of the talent and celebrity of the capital; and the beautiful grounds being quite at my disposal, the place contained abounding sources of enjoyment. It was there and then that I really began my literary career; and though I am still far from the goal I then aspired to, and towards

which I am now little likely to advance, I cannot omit this passing tribute to the *starting post* and its associations.

But it is with the Pyrenees and not with Paris my readers have to do at present. The Bear hunters of the first are even more inviting than the Lion hunters of the latter. In returning to the mountains I feel quite as much at home as in the metropolis of European art and elegance. The stirring recollections of the one fade away before these records of the rough walks and rude enjoyments of the other. Nature, after all—and above all Human Nature—is the true source of undying attraction; and one glimpse into its dark recesses is worth the gaudiest glare of civilization.

In the story of Caribert I have endeavored to depict the workings of the heart, as I believe the heart would work in such situations. I had, (taking for granted that all I have told was fact,) but meagre materials for such an analysis of feeling as I have attempted in the principal character. And the author who would pourtray the feelings of individuals, merely from second-hand sources of information as to their words or actions, must be allowed great latitude, and ought to meet with great indulgence. Writers of fiction—or those who from one or two small facts have to fill up a frame-work of adventure—have a more serious task to perform than general readers may imagine. The historian has certainly the more dignified occupation. He traces out events in their causes, follows them up in their consequences, and works on fact, with Truth for the result. The novelist who shews forth human character has only hints, analogies and suppositions, whereon to build at best a theoretic structure. It is no trifling trial of skill to do this with even limited effect; so as to present a natural picture—that is to say not actually the portrait of a given individual, but a model for which the reader feels that an original might exist. If the character of "Caribert" may claim this merit the author is more than satisfied; for he admits that he had not even the aid of all the circumstances assumed in the tale. That a

Bear hunter existed in the Upper Pyrenees who had abandoned his father in a contest of the kind described, and gone mad in consequence, was a fact. To account for and excuse this fearful aberration, in a way that might excite some sympathy for the recreant, without altogether making him an object of esteem was what was proposed and attempted. Collateral subjects were introduced ; and where were they to be sought ? Were Aline, Claude and the rest beings of the mountains or the imagination ? I cannot allow myself to answer the question so soon after the reader has finished the recital ; for fear of spoiling whatever interest it may have excited. I must again refer to the last page of the volumes.

END OF VOL. I.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS,
OR
TALES OF THE ROADSIDE;
PICKED UP IN THE FRENCH PROVINCES
BY
A WALKING GENTLEMAN.

"I love France so well that I will not part with a Village of it; I will have it all mine."—KING HENRY V.

A NEW EDITION,
REVISED AND CORRECTED ;
WITH AN ORIGINAL INTRODUCTION, AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,
BY THE AUTHOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

BOSTON:
GEORGE ROBERTS, 5 STATE STREET,
1840.



THE PRIEST,
AND
THE GARDE-DU-CORPS.



Charles Sanders Bequest
4-17-28

THE PRIEST, AND THE GARDE-DU-CORPS.

CHAPTER I.

THE reader who has accompanied me thus far, needs not be told that my predilections are not for cities, and may have surmised my aversion towards what are termed in the parlance of war, *strong places*. They only who have been "cribbed and cabined" for months together within the walls of a garrison, can fully comprehend the vigorous simplicity of Cowper's obvious, but not the less original phrase—

"God made the country, and man made the town."—

And nothing short of such a situation can give a true relish for the open walks of nature, where, to use Lord Bacon's words, "the scent of air comes and goes like the warblings of music."

In the ramparted cages to which I allude, every thing is stagnant. All possibility of improvement is excluded, for a boundary is set to moral as well as physical expansion; and an unbroken mediocrity is decreed for generation after generation. The town seems to have sprung, like the children of the fabled mythology, at once from infancy to manhood. A dwarfish precocity has forced the place from its plan to its completion; and it stands a premature pattern of still life and middle age, without the pleasing irregularities of a young establishment, or the touching prognostics of picturesque decay. The inhabitants partake of this prim formality. They are the most regular and least amiable of beings. All the functions of society seem performed by beat of drum. Nothing degenerates or improves. Variety, the brightest charm of life, is unworshipped where the despotism of monotony is bowed down to. Not one sentiment, or im-

pulse, or instinct, seems to revel uncontrolled; and I doubt which calculation is more considered—the quantity of provisions which the population may consume, or the number of mouths which it is expedient to provide for its consumption. All this matter-of-fact slavery is most revolting to one of my rambling turn; and it is rarely that I cross the drawbridge of a garrison town.

One evening, however, during a straggling tour through Flanders, I found myself almost benighted at the gate of one of its strongest fortresses, at that time held by some Prussians, forming part of the army of occupation under the Duke of Wellington's command. I had hoped to pass round the place, and reach a village a couple of leagues further on my route; but I had loitered in pursuit of a scattered covey of birds that had led me a long and fruitless chase across the almost interminable plains. The dusky haze of a September evening forced me to give up the pursuit; and the night was nearly closing in as I recovered the main road, and trudged along, listening to the rustling of the breeze in the standing oats that skirted each side of the paved causeway. The business of the day being over, the peasants of this unlovely region had all closed their huts, and shut their eyes no doubt, upon the joyless world. The desolate bleakness around me made me almost long for darkness, as preferable to the dim monotony of the scene. The distant drums and bugles from the town broke at length on my ear, as they sounded their day dirge to the garrison within; and the wild blast with its rolling accompaniment awoke a train of thoughts of many a former associate, scattered across the surface of the earth or deeply shrouded beneath it. Every step I took seemed to rouse a recollection, like the spirit of some departed scene; and I walked on, in imagined communion with the shades of a less material world.

The sounds gradually died away, and I entered the wretched suburb that looked like a dangling excrescence to the place. The houses of this suburb were so miserable that I, though never over-nice, could not reconcile myself to their outside appearance, or venture my foot within; so I walked up to the moat of a little outwork thrown before the place, and answering the hoarse challenge of a Prussian sentinel, demanded that the bridge might be lowered and I admitted into the town.

It is not necessary to detail the worrying, but perhaps essential, formalities which consumed nearly an hour, before I could take possession of a comfortless bed in the nearest inn. The night passed over as it might; and I rose early, preparing to continue my journey. But the clouds lowered, and the rain poured down, and I was obliged to postpone my departure, and submit to my irksome imprisonment. While I breakfasted and attempted to read and write a little, I heard the well remembered call for *parade*, blown by the bugles and echoed by the drums. There was something vivifying in the sound, which I conjectured to mean more than a mere garrison muster on so wet a morning. I aroused Ranger from his slumber, and proposed a walk, preferring the certainty of a shower without, in search of the meaning of these notes of preparation, to the tedium of a sojourn within. We accordingly rallied out into the street, and

soon came to the principal square, where the regular garrison was already in the ranks, and the national guard struggling in. All the authorities of the place were soon collected; and the crowd was made up of an incongruous assemblage of military, civil, and religious distinctions. In answer to my enquiries, I was informed that in honor of some royal reminiscence, a *Te Deum* was about to be chanted in the cathedral church, and all the preliminary arrangements being completed, the procession was quickly formed; and as the town clock struck twelve it began its march. It rained violently; and whether from this cause, or the more probable one of indifference to these sort of things, but few of the town's-people attended; but the train was swelled out by some curious or idle interlopers, among whom myself and Ranger made muster. The foreign part of the warlike train seemed ill at ease under the shower that was tarnishing their lace and accoutrements; the citizen-soldiers looked sulky and tawdry; the town magistrates tripped mincingly across the dirty pavement in their silk stockings and scarfs; the priests alone trudged carelessly through the gutters, their vestments dabbling in the mud, their hats under their arms, their tonsured skulls exposed to the cold and the invidious drops which trickled through their shabby umbrellas.

From the Hotel de Ville whence we started, we were accompanied to church by a band of music, which, with the regular troops, formed in two lines at each side of the open porch. As I looked through the vista made by their ranks, I saw the massive columns of the church within, standing in dusky solemnity, and forming a lengthened avenue, beyond which I caught a glimpse of the altar, shining far away in gorgeous decoration. Some scattered attendants in white surplices flitted to and fro across its steps; and the vapors of incense, mixed with the duskier clouds exhaled by the gigantic tapers, threw an air of awful mystery over the distant scene.

As I gazed, and already seemed to catch the shadowy inspiration of the place, I was startled—almost shocked, indeed—to observe the leading priest preceded up the aisle by four drummers and about a dozen of the national guard, the former rolling their drums, the echoes of which reverberated wildly through the building. To my increasing astonishment and dismay, this advanced party ascended the steps of the altar, and their careless yet measured tramp struck with unholy echoes upon the sacred floor. They ranged themselves at each side, to the total exclusion of their reverend followers, who occupied seats raised in front at some yards distance. Several females were in the church before our arrival, and being all in their fete dresses, decorated with flowers, and generally good looking, they threw a lighter grace upon the otherwise sombre scene. The general and his staff, with the magistracy and some decently attired civilians, came next in order. I was amongst this group, to which succeeded the less respectable looking stragglers, and a few old women of the lower class. Ranger had slipped in unobserved, and crouched nervously between my legs.

The military were ranged down the aisle in triple ranks, with bayonets fixed and shouldered arms, their long plumes waving high

above the bare heads of the less privileged spectators. The bustle of their arrangement having subsided and order being obtained, the *Te Deum* commenced. The performers were stationed in the gallery at the farthest extremity of the church, and as the soft pealings of the organ swelled out their opening cadences, the notes seemed to sink into my heart, and calmed for a while the rather ruffled sensations excited by the former parts of the ceremony.

But this quiet tone was soon broken in upon, when the orchestra, vocal and instrumental, chimed forth its dissonant interruption. The performers altogether did not exceed a dozen; and the faint scrapings of some ill-tuned violins, mingled with harsh voices, grated odiously upon my ear, and seemed a mockery of the solemn place. Their discord was at times most seasonably interrupted by the rattling of the indefatigable drummers, who on the occasion rather overdid their parts; for an old priest, whose physiognomy spoke him at once good natured and irascible, motioned them with violent gestures to desist. But, ludicrously enough, they supposed that the actions of raising his arm, striking his clenched fist against his thigh, stamping his foot, and shaking his head, urged them to increase their labors—and indeed his movements were any thing but *pianissimo*—and the noise was in consequence for a time increased ten-fold. Twice during the ceremony the altar guard presented arms, and went through some other evolutions, which found no imitation from the ranks, formed down the aisle, standing stiff and formal as if on their regular parade.

When the music had ceased, two of the best dressed and best looking of the ladies went round to collect money, and smilingly solicited contributions for their silver plates. Two or three pieces of gold and a few of the larger silver coins rewarded their efforts. I thought myself almost too moderate in my donation, but was quite surpassed in economy by a flashy looking native beside me, decorated with the cross of the legion of honor, and two other orders to boot, who placed a sou on the plate with a significant glance at me, which seemed to say "You are a Greenhorn!"

The procession left the church, forming the same order in which it had advanced. I quitted it at the door—filled with reflections on the scene I had just witnessed; indulging in the recollections which it forced of the simple worship I had been from infancy accustomed to; and wondering at the proneness of military nations and proud sects, to convert the temples of their God into a place of arms, and frighten at the point of the bayonet each better thought that should rise in purity to Heaven.

CHAPTER II.

The crowd of associations which hurried across my brain seemed to bring with them the necessity of fresh air and a green-wood walk. I felt the cramped streets too narrow for me ; and knowing that go in what direction I might, I should soon reach the limits of the town, and come to the elm-planted promenade of the ramparts, I moved forward, and quickly gained an opening that led me fairly upon them. The day had brightened up, but the earth was still wet, and I had the consolation of seeing the whole extent of the rampart deserted, except by two or three sentinels, moving their human machinery of arms and legs in the nooks of the bastions, where they had to pace out their hours of watch. I stopped for an instant at the head of a flight of wooden steps, inserted into the inner face of the mound, and I cast down alternate looks upon the crowded town which it defended, and the dreary country which it shut out. An embrasure, from which a cannon of large calibre projected, permitted me a view of the ditch and drawbridge, as well as a partial peep at the face of the covered way. In the ditch below, which was quite dry, and converted into an extensive kitchen garden, an inhabitant of the suburb was dressing up a plot of vegetables. A few peasants in starched caps, slouched hats, blue coats or bodices, breeches or petticoats, as the case might be, were clattering with their heavy *sabots* across the bridge, and disappearing under the massive portal. The brick walls at each side had their level faces pitted here and there by the marks of cannon shot, by which the town had been assailed in the short and decisive campaign of the preceding spring. But these skin-deep traces, and the crumbling remains of a couple of earth-formed redoubts, a few hundred yards in front of the place, were the only actual mementos of war. The sullen looking cannons, their heaps of rusty balls beside them, and the plodding sentries pacing backwards and forwards, were mere mechanical appurtenances of what might be either quiet parade or deadly strife. I defy fate to place a man in a position where martial glory and its instruments could present a meaner or less imposing aspect.

Coming close after the scene I had left behind, few situations could be more favorable to that train of prosing philosophy which will force itself, when least called for, upon the observer who has nothing to do but think. I felt, accordingly, falling fast into a mingled labyrinth of metaphysics and morality, when my attention was caught by a figure approaching me from the most distant visible part of the rampart. I soon discovered it to be that of an old *religieux* ; and, as I distinguished the flowing drapery of his black serge dress, his small cocked hat carried in one hand, his prayer book in the other, and the silvery locks which floated out from beneath his black leather scull-cap, I recognized him for the priest, whose interference with the drummers had attracted my attention during the chant of the *Te Deum*. After a time he stopped and looked

around him, and, his vision not being quite as sharp as mine, he seemed satisfied that he was alone and unobserved. He therefore folded the drapery of his cassock still closer to his person, put his hat more securely under his arm, opened his missal, threw a glance towards heaven, crossed himself, and began to read. His devotion was instantaneous and intense. So much so that he passed close enough under the branches of the tree against which I leaned, to admit of the rain drops pattering upon the page, without his observing me or appearing sensible to the falling moisture. He took several short turns in this abstracted mood, muttering aloud his pious and rapid invocations; and I at length, from an impulse of curiosity, or something less frivolous perhaps, resolved to break in upon his occupation and accost him. I accordingly, after a forced cough sufficiently loud to excite his observation, took off my hat and addressed him in the respectful tone habitual, I suppose, to every one who approaches age and piety, yet with a manner verging sufficiently on the familiar to show that I meant something more than a mere passing salutation. He stopped short, looked full upon me an instant, as if striving to recollect my face, closed the book, and replied to my address in terms of simple civility and with a benevolent air. The first step thus taken I really did not well know how to make a second; and I felt that momentary embarrassment likely enough to follow an actual breach of the ice—the common illustration of such a case. My old companion, however, was one of the last persons in the world with whom a man might be subject to a fit of awkwardness. He had not an atom of the feeling which makes some people take pleasure in seeing others ill at ease with themselves. He was too humble in heart to imagine himself for an instant an object of restraint on any one; and more happily still, he had a fluency of thought and tongue which was of all things the most convenient for allowing those he talked with to recover their self-possession. He therefore completely took the lead in the colloquy; and his loquacity flowed on for some time in a quiet stream of common-place remarks, on the weather and other topics of conversational trade, which every one may deal in without much sense or any license.

In the very short replies which I here and there edged in, there was no room for a betrayal of my foreign pronunciation; but I had no sooner uttered half-a-dozen sentences together, in the way of commentary on some twenty or thirty which he had poured forth consecutively, than he made corresponding pauses of foot and tongue, and laying his hand gently on my arm, he looked steadily for a moment in my face, and asked me if I were not English. I made an assenting bow, which he replied to by a nod of the head, a “hem,” and a half-smothered sigh that sounded hoarsely hollow as it escaped him. He stepped on at a brisker pace than before, occasionally shaking his head, uttering such imperfect sounds as the one just described, and striking his hand at times against his thigh and his breast. It was evident that some painful feeling was laboring within, and from a sharp observation of the workings of his countenance, I saw that but very little excitement was wanting to make him give vent to his emotions in a fit of passion or a flood of tears. Not willing to lead him into such betrayal of weakness, I endeavored to resume the thread of our discourse, without weaving a web for his irritabili-

ty; and I calmly remarked, that I was conscious of the many causes for animosity between his nation and mine.

"My nation!" retorted he, with emphasis; and then, after a short pause, his countenance taking a melancholy expression, and his eyes filling up brim-full, he added—"Do me the pleasure, my dear sir, not to use so insulting an epithet in allusion to the miserable colony which my country now is of yours."

I did not know which to be most surprised at in this speech,—the strong feeling of political sensibility, so uncommon in the priesthood, or the deep acknowledgement of national degradation, so unusual in Frenchmen of any class. Determined to bind up the self-inflicted wounds of my companion's pride, I began a train of such soothing observations, as were likely, I thought, to effect that object. I ventured some remarks upon the native richness of the country in soil and productions—the bravery of its men—its historical recollections—and I should have gone much farther had not the priest abruptly stopped me with—"For the love of God, Sir, cease! I do not think you mean to hurt my feelings, but this is a weak point with me. I am old and hot tempered, and can little bear to think of the fertile fields of my country trampled down by English soldiers, nor of her brave youths fighting for English pay against her, nor of her historical recollections, darkened over by divisions and disgrace—this is a theme I cannot talk or think on calmly."

He spoke this with a vehemence that seemed quite to carry him away. His grey eyes flashed fire, and his white hair shook wildly with the rapid motion of his head. His words came out thick and obstructed, and his accent, which was in the former part of our conference particularly pure, and even elegant, was changed by his emotion into something boisterous and coarse. I gazed on him with wonder, for even his physiognomy struck me as no longer the same. There was a turbulent vigour of expression more strong than the fire of French vivacity; and his quivering lip and strained muscles spoke a language less refined than the civilized contortions of French features. Altogether, his person, his gestures, and above all, the words that escaped him, reminded me more of a country than far away from me, than of that in which I was placed at that time. The whole scene brought full upon my mind the memory of my native land; and the reader must excuse the egotism which openly avows what my scribblings have no doubt long since sufficiently betrayed, but which never struck the old priest as a fact, until I formally confessed it to him. As soon as he seemed recovered enough to comprehend me, I exclaimed, "Ah! my good Father, you know not what a chord you have touched. In portraying the temporary degradation of your own country, you have but too truly depicted the long enduring wretchedness of mine. And had I been addressing your words to another, he would not have doubted that I rapidly sketched the outlines of Ireland's woe-worn portrait."

While I began this sentence, his looks flashed wildly again, but as I ended, a fixed stare of surprise, accompanied by a relaxation of feature, took place of his former angry sternness of mien. "I don't exactly understand you," said he eagerly; but recovering in a de-

gree his former tone and accent, "you told me you were an Englishman—didn't you?" "I certainly did, good father, tacitly acknowledge your conjecture as to my nation; but you know there is no distinction for us here; we are all English on the Continent; but I am, I must confess it—an Irishman."

Scarcely was this last word uttered by me, when—how shall I express my astonishment—the old priest started back—then, throwing aside both hat and prayer book, sprang forward,—opened his arms—flung them round my neck—burst into tears;—and with a broad, rich, genuine Irish brogue, exclaimed in English, that bore no taint of *foreign* accent, "An Irishman—an Irishman! you an Irishman! and I after taking you all the while for English—for an inimy! Oh murther, murther, it's too bad entirely. For the love of Jasus forgive me my jewel—my heart's chuck full of joy and sorrow. An Irishman! Oh the devil a doubt of it—long life to your potaty face, it spakes for you plain enough! an Irishman! Oh murther, murther!"

Great as was his surprise, it could not have equalled mine, although its expression was somewhat more extravagant. I found it hard to reconcile my belief to the evidence of the metamorphosis which I witnessed; and I fear I shall have a difficult task, to persuade my readers of the reality of the scene. The change was complete, not only of tone and manner, but it seemed also of character and appearance. The pure French accent and suavity of diction, and the polished air and bearing of a perfect gentleman, were at once converted, as if by magic, into the sweeping overflowings of Hibernian rusticity and warm-heartedness. Both characters seemed equally his in all the shades of their wide distinction; the one not for an instant blending with the other, and each adapted to him in its turn as if no other could by possibility be his. It was quite marvellous to me, and I gazed on him as a kind of phenomenon.

After he had embraced me a dozen times, uttering at every pause incoherent sentences of astonishment and delight, I recovered myself sufficiently to demand some explanation of this double transformation. "Why at least," said I, "did you not address me in English, when I acknowledged myself to be a British subject?"

"What! do you think then," replied he with warmth, "that I would bemean myself so far before an Englishman, as to speak his language and to proclaim myself his slave, when I could talk French and avow myself his inimy!"

"But when you addressed me you evidently spoke of Ireland, and felt only for her!"

"Troth, that's true enough, agra! but I had the pleasure all the while of cutting the cowl'd heart of a Sassanach, without plainly telling him he was my master; and, after all, France is little better nor Ireland now-a-days. They sarve her as they please, and as she well deserves, to tell the truth of it—but one doesn't like to confess that these English have right on their side any way."

The bitter tone of this speech told as plainly as the words the inveterate hatred of the simple and honest minded speaker, and as our conversation warmed, I came into the gradual knowledge of the pe-

caliberities of his situation, and the singleness of his heart. The wonderful contradiction of his manner, when viewed in the different aspects which I have attempted to show to my readers, was easily accounted for, when I learned that he had left Ireland fifty years before, at the age of fifteen, and had ever since that time lived entirely in France; inhaling with the prejudices of the country continual nutriment for those more properly his own, and, while acquiring a perfect knowledge of the language not losing one tone peculiar to his native utterance and accent; his manner of acting as well as speaking had become quite French, while his habits of thought and feeling were still strictly Irish. Some peculiar faculty of memory allowed him to learn a new language, without in the least degree losing the old; and he presented the most extraordinary instance of a double identity that ever came under my observation.

There was one peculiar characteristic about him which was ludicrous in a high degree. While speaking French his words seemed culled with the minutest variety of selection, and not a syllable crept in that bore the slightest relation to impiety or freedom of speech. When he spoke English every sentence was thickly larded with phrases of the lowest rank in the diction of Ireland, and with oaths of the very coarsest kind. The fact was, that he spoke the first language as it had been taught him in a convent, and the latter as he had learned it in bogs and mountains. The one had all the restraint and elegance of the art, the other the untutored energy of nature. In Ireland he had been little better than a peasant; in France he became a gentleman; and I could dwell, for page after page, in efforts to describe and account for the facility with which he preserved and shifted each distinctive character—like a man slipping from his fustian shooting-jacket into his silk dressing-gown, and seeming equally at home in each.

I am almost ashamed to confess my regret that I cannot commit his oaths to print; because I feel that my samples of his conversation lose more than half their flavor deprived of those coarse exclamations, which he uttered quite unconsciously, and which, from him were as harmless as the softest lisps of innocence. I may, at least, *salvo pudore*, give some of his less offensive quotations, with his peculiar translations of them,—for he was a poet as well as a priest.

"Oh, my darling!" exclaimed he, with a thundering oath; "never—never forget your country, or abandon her in distress. High or low, rich or poor, on foot, or a-horseback, remember the parent that bore you—

'Antiquam exquirite matrem.'

'Seek out your ould mother,
You'll find no such another.'

That's Ireland,—ould Ireland, my darling, as she is called now-a-days; or, Iniafail, Iniafaga, Jerna, Juverna, Iris or Erin, as our forefathers, the Milesians, used to call her in other and better days than ours. You'll never forget her, will you?" continued he, with great earnestness.

"I hope I never shall, my good father," replied I, scarcely able to repress a smile which seemed to rise to my lips, from a mixed feeling in which pleasure was predominant.

"*Hope* you won't! be sure of it, my jewel, if you'd expect good luck in this unfortunate world. No good can come of a man that forgets his own country, abroad or at home. Remember what Horace told us,

'Cælum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.'

'They change their skies, but not their hearts.
Who cross the seas to foreign parts.'

"Remember that, agra; and don't be worse nor the Romans. You wouldn't would you?"

"No, not willingly," said I.

"Not at all, you mean," cried he briskly; "don't be saying the thing by halves. Let patriotism be patriotism, out and out. It never does no good when it's split into halves. Remember that we're scattered over the face of the world, true enough,—driven out of our beautiful island,—banished from the greenest spot on earth.—

'Nos patriæ fines, et dulcia linquimus arva.'

'We quit our beautiful country's bounds,
Like hunted hares before the hounds.'

But that's no reason why we shouldn't come round to our *forms* again. Saint Patrick forgive me! (and Virgil too!) for a free translation and a joke, at the cost of my country and eclogue the first. But the joke's a bitter one; and what's worse, it's a true one, God help us!"

Such, with the exception of the oaths, which my companion unconsciously vollied forth, and which I listened to with fear lest the ramparts might echo them to some scandal-catching ear, was the general tenor of an hour's discourse. If the patriotism of the honest creature I conversed with ever slumbered, it did so like a hare with its eyes open, and was in an instant ready to spring forth at the slightest excitement. Country was with him indeed a fertile soil, and brought forward, at each mention a plentiful crop of quotations and translations, the most distorted and ludicrous. He cited, without mercy Tacitus, Camden, and the venerable Bede, Rhodagonus, Stan-hurst, Gualdus Cambrensis, and all other writers, ancient and modern, upon Ireland, to prove what was never, I believe, doubted,—that her soil was the most fertile and least productive, her position the most favorable and least advantageous, and her people the most governable, and the worst governed, of any in the world.* From these, and other points of a general nature, he branched off into occasional mention of his personal concerns, connections, and adventures; gave ancestral sketches of his family, from the days of Mil-

*Sicily may be excepted.

ging down to those of his own father and name-sake, Mister Dennis O'Collogan, of Sheelanabawn; and made himself acquainted with as much as I knew of my family, which was just enough to convince him that his comparative mushroom growth, its English origin, and above all, its religion, were barely sufficient to give me the title of an Irishman by courtesy, but no more *claim* to it than a man whose birth, parentage, and education had been confined to an island in the Indian Archipelago.

Two circumstances connected with this subject gained me, however, a degree of favor in his eyes, which common causes could never have produced. The first was, when in answer to his enquiry—"If I had ever heard tell of the Bog of Allen?" I replied, that I had been born, or at least nursed, upon its borders;—that the whistling of the wind across its brown bleak breast, and the shrill cries of the curlews that sprung from its heather into the skies, were the first sounds that impressed themselves upon my recollection;—that the blackened ruins of Castle Carbery, rising far upon its skirts, were the earliest objects on which my memory seemed to have reposed;—and that its fragrant wild-flowers and mossy banks had been many a time my pillows in the dreamless sleep of infancy. The next matter which endeared me to the friendship of father O'Collogan, was the mention of my *name*. He was too well informed on the affairs of Ireland not to feel that it had been naturalized there, by nearly half a century of connection with all that concerned the country's good; and he did honor, for its sake, to one who bears it with a pride that is deeply blended with humility.

The result altogether of our conference was an invitation from father O'Collogan to dine with him in his private lodging; and I felt myself both inclined and entitled to accept of his hospitality.

CHAPTER III.

"This is the house," said my inviter, as he stopped before a wretched looking habitation, in a narrow lane close behind the church.

"Do you live *here*, my good Sir?" asked I.

"Where else would I live but in my own lodging?" answered he, in the Irish fashion; and, tucking up his cassock high above his knees, he stepped over the thick puddle which lay stagnant before the entrance, mounted the half dozen broken steps leading up to it, and then sidled his broad shoulders through the little passage which led into the dark recesses of the place. I observed him to cross himself as he went in; and, looking up, saw in a niche over the porch, in which there was no door, a little image in plaster of Paris, representing a female with a

child in her arms, daubed all over with red and green paint, decked in some tarnished fringe and faded silk for drapery, and a bunch of twisted leaves around the head, withered and wasted into a mockery of what once was flowers. On a stone tablet beneath was carved in the rudest possible chiselling,

Si l'amour de Marie est dans ton cour grave
Bon chretien arrete, et lui dire un Ave.

I afterwards learned that this caricature of the virgin and her babe was placed as a protection from the attacks of robbers, and was supposed of sufficient efficacy to supply the place of a door; and I have since frequently observed that these effigies are almost invariably to be seen placed on dwellings where no temptation to robbery could exist, or where a rational defence was beyond the purchase of the inhabitants.

I worked my way along the ragged floor of the passage, following closely on the heels of my conductor, whose tall figure and outstretched arms were just visible as he groped along.

"Take care of the steps, my jewell," cried he, as I stumbled up the first of a flight of stone stairs which he was rapidly ascending.

"I'll take care of *myself* if I can," replied I, laying hold of the crazy banisters with one hand, feeling my way against the wall with the other, and following as quickly as possible the strides which he was making upwards. The sun-beams glimmering through the dimness of a sheet of brown paper on an unsashed window-frame over the first landing place, enabled me to proceed more securely on the ascent, which long habit had rendered so familiar to the priest's touch, as to make light quite unnecessary to him. He seemed to have no notion of my knowledge of the place being more limited than his own; and he neither made apology for its miserable appearance, nor used ceremony in our occupation of it.

On the third, which was indeed the attic story, he paused, and taking from his pocket a key of most unwieldy dimensions, and the rudest specimen of French manufacturing clumsiness, he opened a door and invited me to walk into his *apartment* as he called it. I entered, and took my place on one of three crazy rush-bottomed chairs, which, with a rickety table and a small old-fashioned carved *secretaire*, formed the visible furniture of the room. A faded green striped curtain hanging before a recess, concealed, as I afterwards found out, a *lit de sangle*, that is a bedstead of the meanest construction, which, covered with bedding perfectly corresponding, composed the couch where the worthy tenant of the garret passed nights of pure tranquillity that monarchs might have envied. A couple of coarse prints of our Saviour and the Virgin were fastened with wafers against the white-washed wall; a box-wood crucifix stood upon the mantel-piece; three or four torn books lay on a shelf in the corner; and a *preparation* for fire-lighting filled the hearth, in the shape of two small pieces of wood with some shavings, supported behind by an apparently substantial log, which my accustomed eye soon however detected for one of those stone imitations of faggots known by the name of *Buches Economiques*. The only window of the room was placed in a position the most disadvantageous to the

common purpose of a window, for it was directly facing the high wall of the old charch, and instead of admitting the rays of the sun and a view of the heavens, it only displayed the discolored stones of the tottering edifice, and a couple of those hideous faces, neither of men nor beasts, which topple grimacingly over the parapets of gothic structures.

"Well, my darling," cried father O'Collogan, rubbing his hands and looking hospitality personified, "you see I'm snug enough here, and heartily welcome you are to the share of it. It isn't much that a man wants in this dirty world, and in troth, I've nothing to complain of; I'm comfortable and content. Would you like me to light the fire? Not that the day's cowl'd at all, at all—but may be you'd like a bit of a blaze?"

Before I could answer this question, put in so very questionable a way, a gust of wind forced in the leaves of old books which were substituted for more than one square of broken glass in the window; and these paper panes fluttering and flapping against the frame, answered more plainly than I could.

"Well then, bad luck to that thievish *spalpeen* of a glazier, that won't come and put putty on this paper to keep it in its place! One would think it was a windy day, but it's nothing at all more nor a little breeze that's just turning the corner of the steeple—but may be you're cowl'd? Would you like a fire, agra?" said the priest.

"Why, faith, Sir," answered I, "I think a cheerful blaze in the chimney would not be amiss."

"And why didn't you say so?" cried he briskly, opening at the same time a drawer in the little table, and taking out a tinder-box. "There's nothing easier, nothing in the world," continued he hammering a flint against a broken segment of an old horse-shoe. His tinder at length caught the spark, and he immediately lighted a match and applied it to the shavings, which as quickly sent out a volume of thick smoke that was met half way up the chimney by "the little breeze," which rolled it back in suffocating volleys into the room.

"Why then the devil fetch that dirty little blackguard of a sweep," exclaimed my host, "that nothing can get him to clean that chimney! but it's well the glazier did not mend the window after all, for if he did, we must have been obliged to open it. It'll all pass out of the broken panes immediately, my dear don't be uneasy. I know the ways of the place. Would you just excuse me for five minutes' while I go into the closet to take off my things, and all will be right by and by?"

I bowed consent, and he opened a door that admitted him into a little place, which seemed about the depth of a common-sized cupboard, and while changing his dress, he left me to ruminate in the smoke, on the comparative demerits of glaziers and chimney-sweepers, currents of air, and ill constructed funnels. My reflections would probably have taken a turn somewhat more solid and tangible, had not their progress towards condensation been interrupted by the re-appearance of my host, who very quickly emerged from his retreat. His alteration of costume rather startled me at first glance, for he seemed once more to have changed with it his character. But a

minute or two convinced me that I now saw him in his primitive original aspect, stripped of the fifty years' disguise, that stood with regard to him in that secondary and artificial position, which according to the proverb use does to nature. He had carefully hung his hat and cassock on a peg in his dressing closet, his black leather cap upon another, his high brass-buckled shoes also were deposited on their respective hooks in the partition wall, as well as the cravat and band which had completed his professional attire. He now appeared in a short skirtless jacket of coarse brown woollen, with pantaloons of the same, serving also for stockings, and covering his feet, which were moreover garnished with a worn-out pair of stained cloth slippers, the original colour of which it was beyond my skill to distinguish. His white locks flowed unconfined upon his shoulders, and his open shirt collar showed a throat still stout and muscular, and the broad bony chest covered thickly with curled grey hair. There was a flush on his gaunt and furrowed cheeks, which seemed to emanate from the same feeling that sparkled in his eyes, and though the feeling might seem to a stranger one of reckless tumult or wild outrage, I saw that it was clearly a blended love of country, and delight in hospitality; the genuine union of national and domestic warmth, so rarely to be found and so hard to be appreciated. His figure and mien taken altogether were as far removed as possible from any theological associations, and he only wanted a shillelah brandished in his hand, to give a perfect notion of an Irish patriarch, leading on his clans to a banquet, or a battle, indifferent as to which.

The smoke, after having performed sundry vapoury evolutions under the opposing influences of the chimney and the window, was now quietly taking its regular road to evaporation; and while the priest saw it clearing off, he rubbed his hands together and smiled joyously, taking a chair beside mine and telling me ten times over that I was "heartily, heartily welcome." In a minute or two he started up, as if just recovering the trace of some fugitive thought, opened the room door, and called in all the civility and mildness of the French language and accent, upon Madame Genevieve, his next neighbour on the same landing place, requesting her "to have the complaisance to occupy herself about preparing his dinner, of which a friend was going to partake, if it did not put her to any inconvenience." Madame Genevieve replied that "she was always ready for the service of *le bon Pere Denis*, and that the soup should be on the table in ten minutes." This announcement from her shrill voice was followed by the appearance of her shrivelled face and form, as she tottered in, bent almost double by age, infirmity, and the weight of a coarse brown table-cloth and a couple of napkins. The table was soon arranged by the old priest and this faithful friend and serving woman, who had prepared his frugal meals and attended to his desolate chamber for more than twenty years. Her next entry into the room was with a large earthen pot, called in France a *marmite*, which she deposited by the fire, while she went out again to complete the omelet, for the making of which the said *marmite* was removed from her fire to ours. I knew this was *jour maigre* for the worthy priest, and, as a tureen of onion soup was quickly smoking

on the table, I was rather puzzled to divine what were the contents of the pot, until their boiling furiously up against the lid forced it to one side, and I discovered amidst the foam of the agitated water a quantity of large potatoes, dancing in the bubbling element and bursting their skins as if they laughed in concert with the emotion.

"My good Father," cried I, not a little pleased at this plentiful specimen of our national food, "I see you have not lost your Irish-taste."

"God forbid that I did!" replied he; "no, no, my dear child, there's no fear of my losing the taste of any thing Irish, for I've the smack of the potatoes, and the flavour of the turf just as fresh upon my palate this minute as the day I sailed from the Cove of Cork. Sit over—sit over to the table, my Jewel—Madame Genevieve will be after draining the potatoes while we're aiting our soup."

These operations were duly performed, and when our part was finished the old woman placed her pyramid of *pommes de terre au naturel* in the centre of the table.

"Ah, there they are the smilers, smoking and mailey!" exclaimed the priest. "There they are, just quite as natural as if they came out of my poor ould father's cabbage garden at the fut of Castle Carbery. Why then doesn't this put you in mind of Ireland? upon my salvation it warms the heart in my body, that's no lie that I tell you. Och! that's the real way to dress potatoes—there's none of your *frites* or *purees*, or *maitres d'hotel*, but plain honest downright thumpers, bursting out through their skins, and crying 'come ait me, come ait me,' like the little pigs with the knives and forks in them."

But I cannot afford more room to a detail of our repast, nor of my host's discourse. The homeliness of both possessed a considerable relish for me; and the natural bearing of the priest while I partook of his humble fare, and listened to his coarse phraseology, put me completely at my ease, because it convinced me that he was perfectly at his.

When we had finished the soup, the omelet, a bit of salt fish, and the "biggest half of the potatoes," as my host expressed it, he stood up and produced from the bottom of a little press in the wall, a bottle covered with dust, and about half full of a colourless liquid.—While he proceeded to break off the sealing wax which thickly covered the cork, I saw the tears rush into his eyes, as his countenance became evidently agitated.

"Well then," cried he, "it's a thought that suddenly struck me, and sure it isn't a bad one;—yes, yes, by my sowl, you shall drink share of it, you shall, and you're the first man that has as much as smelt it, for two-and-twenty years. There—smell it, what is it do you think? do you know what it is now—Eh?"

I smelt it and tasted accordingly, and found that this treasure was nothing more nor less than some exquisite old whiskey, possessing the fine flavour of the peat smoke with which all the illicit spirits made in Ireland is impregnated.

"Ha!" exclaimed I, "this is indeed a treat. How did you come by this, my good father?"

"Never you mind how I came by it, but make yourself a tumbler—Madame Genevieve will give us hot water and sugar immediately. How I come by it is a long story—but we'll drink to the memory of him who gave it to me, any how; God rest his innocent soul!"

There was a tone of deep grief in the utterance of this phrase, and I saw the big tears rolling rapidly down the old man's cheeks.

"Aye, aye, roll away, rowl away," cried he bitterly apostrophising the falling drops, and dashing them off with his hand—"it's right that my old heart should weep drops of blood if possible, instead of salt water—but even that's not wanting to keep my sorrow fresh—rowl away, rowl away!"

My curiosity being powerfully excited by these words I ventured to ask who had been the lamented friend whose memory caused him such grief.

"Why, my jewel, he was nothing but a *garde-du-corps*, what you'd call in English, one of the body guard of unfortunate Louis the Sixteenth. But he was my friend, and a real gentleman bred and born—of as ancient a family, as pure blood, and as brave a heart as any king in Christendom—that's what he was; and the devil such another he left behind him. Here's long life to his memory, which will never die while there's life in this old body any how."

"I pledge your melancholy toast, my dear Sir," said I, "without knowing even the name of your lamented friend."

"His name was Cornelius," said the priest solemnly, "that is his Christian name: as to the other, it is not convenient nor necessary to expose an old and honorable family, though he took good care, poor creature, that his body should be as free after death as his mind was while he lived—the Lord have mercy upon his unfortunate soul!"

It would be impossible to convey any notion to my readers of these deep-sounding sensibility which breathed in these expressions, or of the proof which the speaker's manner afforded how natural feeling can overwhelm every impression of the ludicrous or vulgar. A high priest in his pontificals could not have pronounced an invocation in a strain of eloquence more effective than the simple exclamation of my uncassocked host. The faint light of a solitary lamp, and the moaning of the wind through the turrets and angles of the church outside, were in keeping with the train of feelings excited by the looks and words of the priest, and they were altogether more solemn than might appear natural to their abrupt development, or even the subject they were linked with.

A few minutes were passed in deep silence, during which the lips of my companion betrayed by their motion the prayers which he half felt and half uttered. I was intently observing the workings of his countenance, when the deep tone of the church bell roused him up. He started from his seat, exclaiming, "The vesper bell! I must leave you, my dear child, for awhile by yourself—I am rather past my time as it is—but I'll not be long, and you must amuse yourself with this bottle of whiskey and your own thoughts. When I come back I'll tell you more about poor Cornelius—but stop; may be you'd like to read something about him in the mean time, would you?"

"You have deeply interested me for your friend," replied I; "and I shall hear or read any thing about him with no common anxiety."

"Well, then, open that *secrétaire*," said he, "you'll find several bundles of letters and papers in both prose and verse, written partly of him, and to him, and by him. You may turn them all over and over; yours is the first eyes that has looked upon them, barring my own, since the poor fellow tied them up himself in the bundle there. I'm afraid they're rather mouldy and moth-eaten, but you'll see for yourself. God bless and preserve you my hopey, till I come back to you, any how."

No sooner had the priest quitted the room, than I took possession of the large paquet of manuscripts from the *secrétaire*, brought it over to the table, placed a fresh log upon the fire, trimmed the little lamp, and was beginning to read, when the door opened, and he suddenly re-appeared. "That's right, my jewel," cried he, "make yourself snug and cozy, and read away till I come back to you—but I'm just stepped in again to tell you that Madame Genevieve will make up a bed for you on the chairs to-night—a shake down as we say in Ireland—you can't think of leaving the house, for it's raining cats and dogs outside in the street, so make yourself snug and cozy, mind what I tell you—and mix another tumbler."

"My dear sir," exclaimed I, "I cannot consent to give you and your old woman all this trouble—really—"

"Hould your tongue, hould your tongue, I tell you. Your trouble's my pleasure, and Madame Genevieve's too, so no more's to be said about it—good evening to you."

With these words he disappeared once more, and I betook myself again to my new studies, not at all sorry at the prospect of passing my night in company with the MSS. however bad my accommodation.

It is scarcely necessary to say how long or how short a time I sojourned in the neighborhood of Father O'Collogan. My readers would most probably rather hear the story of his friend the *garde-du-corps*. This I shall as usual tell in my own fashion, making use of the scattered papers confided to me for that purpose by the priest, according to my own discretion, and I trust *discreetly*. They consisted of many letters, originals and copies, many leaves of a regular journal, fugitive notions apparently just arrested on their flight, and three or four pamphlets relating to events of more than twenty years before, all put together without the least order, and requiring much trouble and management before they acquired the regular air of the story I am about to present to my readers; and it may be needless to state that many a hiatus was filled up by the minute details furnished to me by my worthy assistant.

CHAPTER IV.

The principal hero of my story, for its title tells that it has two, was called Cornelius at his baptism, in compliment to a long train of recollections linked to a name which had been borne with pride by many of his ancestors. His family appellation I am not at liberty to record. Its concealment was the only restriction put by Father O'Collogan upon my free-will, in the application of the materials with which he furnished me. It is sufficient to state that it was one of the oldest and most respectable in Ireland, belonging to a family which had been ever famed for its nationality, which had never bought freedom from proscription at the price of dishonor, and which felt its pride regularly increase in proportion as its wealth diminished. Our hero's father was bred in the religion of his ancestors; and although he had long broken from the trammels of the Roman Catholic faith, he felt it a point of honor to maintain an outward adherence to a belief, which persecution had re-adorned in all the attractions that reason had torn from it. Had he renounced it publicly he might have gained wealth and distinction in almost any line of life, for he was a man of an enlightened and powerful mind; but he scorned the wages of an apostacy that might bear the construction of self-interest. He was therefore one among the millions of Irish secured to the church of Rome, by the very means, ill-planned as they were odious, adopted for promoting its subversion. Finding that in his own country he had no chance of advancement, he resolved to enter into the service of some foreign power, and carve out for himself a road to the fame for which he panted. He made choice of France; and he fought under the banners of the lily for ten years. His military career was at this time stopped by severe and almost incurable wounds. He was forced to renounce the hopes of his youth long before they had attained completion; and, while yet within the earlier half of man's measured span, he retired to his native country with the rank of Major, and a reduced but still sufficient income. He there married, but soon lost his wife by death—but was consoled for twenty years by watching the growth, and training the mind of his only son, Cornelius, the hero of our tale. The education of this boy became almost his only occupation. Bad health and broken prospects had brought on an indolence of habit which was not natural to him. He became sedentary and lived secluded. His ancient family mansion, standing on a rock and frowning blackly down upon the fierce Atlantic, whose keen blasts were yearly wearing it away, was rarely visited by the scanty neighborhood around. The owner repulsed the advances of society, and the place had few attractions, but for him and his young charge. They pursued together a course of study, and amusement of a peculiar kind; irregular and isolated, but effective. On somewhat more than the rudiments of classical learning, Cornelius had engrafted a knowledge of more than one foreign language. He was perfect master of French, which he talked habitually with his father, who not disheartened by his own ill-luck, meant his son to try the same career in which he had broken down. Military topics were therefore the chief theme of their discourse, but

others had their share of attention. Field sports held a prominent place in the pursuits of Cornelius ; and often, in calm and storm, he boldly committed himself to the ocean, in his little fishing skiff, accompanied by his foster-brother and favorite companion, a wild but faithful youth called Bryan Mulcahie. Cornelius had a natural taste for the arts, which was not left uncultivated by his careful parent. He learned the first principles of design and coloring. He loved music—and often gave the tones of his youthful voice, mingling with his father's sonorous notes, held harmony together, on the rocky battlement that raised the singers high above the waves which rushed in hoarse murmuring through the cavities below.

Frequently in their evening loiterings, after they had sung together some mournful ditty, on Irish subjects and in their native language, the father would pause, and repressing a rising sigh or tear, he would make Cornelius look round towards the east, and gaze with him on the wide tract of hill and dale, that was once the possession of their ancestors. Then as their eyes, little by little, sank down on the narrowed spot of ground which fines and confiscation had left to them, the fierce soldier would feel all his energy rise up. He would then in language of deep eloquence, teach his son a lesson of hatred against England ; and next by an abrupt transition instil some feeling favorable to France—the refuge of their race. The intellect of the boy thus nurtured, made daily progress in wild yet vigorous growth. His father's words sank deep into his heart. In proportion as he shrunk from England and its associations, he naturally turned towards France ; and all the day dreams of his youth seemed to rise from the pleasant vineyards, the bright gardens and gay promenades of the country which he looked to as the field of his future hopes. From unhappy Ireland he was taught to expect nothing, for his family and his kind saw nought in relation to her but disgrace in the past, and despair for what was to come.

Once only during his boyhood, when he was scarcely of an age to comprehend the events that were then acting, one broken beam of gladness seemed to play on the surface of the wretchedness which had so long flooded his country. This was the epoch of 1782, when the rushing eloquence of one great man shook corruption on its very throne, and roused from their inmost recess every element of that public feeling which seemed to sleep the sleep of death. It was at this period when Cornelius saw his father, in common with all who possessed a spark of patriotism in their hearts, bind on his sword once more, and mingle in the ranks of Ireland's volunteers, that the ardent boy thought his country might yet demand a place among the nations. The faint gleam died away, and a lengthened shadow lay unlit upon the land. Older and wiser heads drooped down once more ; but our hero, growing every year into the maturity of enthusiasm, which becomes old ere reason ripens, held proud language and high hopes, while others doubted and despaired. It was about this time that he gave himself up to the indulgence of an uncultured love for poetry, and under the impulse of some strong feelings of resentment for the unmitigated reproaches poured out against his country, he gave vent to his thoughts in the following

STANZAS TO IRELAND.

1.

Aye, let all earth cry out on thee,—all those
 Who mark thy red crimes blazoned to the world,
 Like the stained Corsair's, whose broad banner glows
 Far o'er the outraged seas in blood unfurled.
 They hear the blasphemous utterance of thy tongue;
 Thy miscreant yells come through the shuddering air:
 But all unseen the goad and knotted throng,
 Which lash thee on, and drive thee to despair.

2.

As Spartan slaves, wine-maddened by their lords,
 Revived—then scourged into sobriety;
 So driven, so drunk with guilt, thy frantic hordes;
 So scorn and scourge, my country, fall on thee!
 What would thy rulers have from thee? Repose?
 Are flowers the crop which ravaged deserts yield?
 Or would they reap, from regions steeped in woes,
 The harvest springing from Joy's cultured field?

3.

Like some bright blade—the day of battle past—
 Flung by, in desolate damps, to rot and rust,
 So they who used thy energies have cast
 Thee off despised, to let foul crimes encrust
 Thy beauteous face; and thence, corroding, eat
 Deep to the inmost kernel of thy heart;
 And when thy forced deformities they meet,
 Cry out, "How rotten and how vile thou art!"

4.

But, as a lorn barge, loosed upon the wave
 From the proud ship which bore it on her deck,
 Thou yet may'st ride the storm—the billows brave,
 Which whirl the fragments of her shattered wreck
 Down ocean's gulphs; the while thy snow-white sails,
 Emblems of purity and peace, are seen
 In brighter suns, and fanned by milder gales,
 To shine and flutter o'er the Atlantic green.

5.

Thy teeming vales, thy mountain heights sublime,
 Where Nature's gifts have all advanced and thriven,
 Tell that thou wert not singled out for crime,
 Nor branded as earth's shame by angry Heaven.

And must the mighty river of the mind
 Roll refluxant back, despite of Nature's plan ?
 Must all else flourish, nurtured by mankind,
 Save one degenerate growth, and that one—Man ?

6.

No—suffering land ! Heaven's righteous arm will foil
 The impious authors of thy deeds of night ;
 And o'er the stains of thine ensanguined soil,
 Proud stems of virtue cast their shadows bright !
 And shouts may echo yet from thy wild hills,
 Their sides reverberant answering to the plains,
 Such tone as that which through the bosom thrills,
 When freedom's trumpet sounds o'er broken chains !”

I have selected these lines from many such effusions, to the full as desultory, and still more rebellious ; because I think them as much adapted to the state of Ireland in our own time, as they were in that when they were written. But it would appear that the bright anticipations here indulged in suddenly sunk into that state of hopelessness which I have described as common to the connections of Cornelius. At twenty years of age his tone was totally altered ; his verses breathed no more a spirit of ardent expectation, and he embraced with unspeakable delight the offer made to his father, in his behalf, of a commission as garde-du-corps in the service of the king of France. He had been for some time looking out for this appointment. It had been obtained through the interest of his father's military friends at the court of Versailles ; and during the interval between the formal demand and its final success, our hero's mind turned, as was natural to his time of life, but more particularly to his individual character, solely and with impassioned ardour on the object directly in his view.

Cornelius was, in the purest meaning of the word, an enthusiast ; a youth of genuine, not factitious sentiment,—of high-wrought feelings untinged by prejudice, and free from the spurious vigour which marks the tone of the frantic. His intellect was expansive, and consequently liberal. His views were not narrowed, but his affections were. He could take a wide range into the fields of speculative enquiry ; but when a passion touched his heart, it instantly absorbed it. He fixed on an object of devotion, and every faculty of his soul seemed centered there, as though one powerful point of attraction had gathered round it each varying tone of sentiment and thought. For this ruling object, be it what it might, he would risk any thing, without calculating what he risked, and sacrifice all, unconscious that he made a sacrifice. In gazing upon it, distance, or time, or obstacles existed not for him. He bounded over space, and spurned impediments. The abstraction of his looks spoke the fullness, not the vacuum of his mind. The fervour of his words sprung from energy, not violence. His individual existence seemed unreal. He neither lived nor moved as of or for himself ; for the very plans and purposes of his being seemed dependant on that other impulse, whose

movements seemed to lead, although they were not linked with his. Such are the striking characteristics of feeling—the wild forgetfulness of self—the absolute devotedness to somewhat else—be it a person, a passion, a sentiment, or a sensation—which constitute, according to my creed, the frame of thought that may be honored with the term of enthusiasm.

But the dignity of such a state of mind is highly dangerous. The state itself is neither sane nor solid. It offers no security for real advantage to the possessor, or rational benefit to others. All its attributes are vapoury, however pure; and while the mortality it is joined with, needs incitements essentially real, it yields but abstractions and vain sounds. To make enthusiasm useful to mankind, it requires a union with those positive feelings of our nature which modify its excess and bring it to the level of human sentiment, while it lifts them above the mark of human weakness. It is thus that enthusiasts are always bad statesmen, and worse patriots. They pursue a phantom, and let slip the substance. They misconceive their object, and miscalculate their means; and in their ideal views of moral cause, they wholly overlook the more material point of physical result. Had the mind of Cornelius been finally devoted to his country's service, the chances are that he would have done her harm instead of good; and that his aspirations after liberty, his philanthropy, his courage and his virtue, might have all, as in an instance later than his time, have led a noble youth into inevitable ruin, forced out his dying breath amidst the horrors of a scaffold, and buried the fresh springing hopes of his country in the imputed ignomy of a traitor's grave.

The destiny of our hero turned him from a fate like this, and a prospect of military fame seemed spreading out before him. Had he followed it to the end there is no knowing what he might have become. A conqueror and a king perhaps!—as it was, he was reserved for something not so elevated certainly, and therefore more within the reach of our sympathy. He, however, unable to foresee his fortunes, plunged boldly into the futurity which his ardent imagination conjured up, and he thought he saw passing before him shadows of glory and greatness, which he afterwards found to have been reflected from no substance. His father was, in a more sober way, almost equally happy. He not only rejoiced for Cornelius's sake in the fair prospect of honorable distinction which was opened to his talents and his courage, but he also felt that deep delight with which a parent gazes on a child of promise, in the irresistible conviction that it is doomed to add to the honor of its race, and to complete those steps towards reputation which he himself may have had the happiness to make. This is one of the purest feelings which can animate a father's breast. It is separate from every tinge of jealousy or envy, for we form and fashion out our rival offspring in the hope of his surpassing us, and feel honored in the anticipation of his superiority. How well it is for fathers that they may not raise the curtain of the future, and weep over the weakness or worthlessness of those who follow them! This last reflection must not however be taken as applying to Cornelius.

The preparations for his departure were soon made. His ward-

robe was choice but scanty. His books few but good. His drawing materials, his flute, his gun, a case of pistols, and a few other objects of utility rather than show completed his equipment. He carried a small sum of ready cash, a letter of credit on a Paris Banker, three or four of introduction and recommendation to his father's military friends. Among the latter was included one to "Le Pere Denis O'Collogan," the former chaplain of that regiment of the Irish Brigade in which Cornelius's father had served, but now removed from military associations, and filling the humble station of curate-assistant to one of the parishes of the town of Versailles, at that epoch the seat of Government and Royalty, and consequently the destination of our hero.

Cornelius left his home, the narrow circle of his affections and attachments, with feelings of almost unmixed pleasure. His very regrets were rather of a soothing than of a bitter nature: and the tears which gushed from his eyes seemed to flow from a source that did not spring in woe. He looked on his separation from all that he loved, as a joining link to their future meeting, rather than one never to be renewed. He glanced quickly over the absence that was to check their intercourse, and pictured the joys of its revival, as the traveller who stands on the edge of some chasm that separates one mountain from another, looks across it at the sunny banks beyond, without reflecting that they may be overcast, while he tracks the weary paths of the ravine, which he must descend and mount before he can reach them. The few servants—the numerous followers—the old nurse—the Parish Priest—all who were connected with the family by internal or external ties, poured blessings on Cornelius as they bade him adieu; and the general hope among the sorrowing group was, that "the Young Master" was one day to return, a great General at the head of a French army to give freedom to his country. His father accompanied him to the seaport a few miles distant, where he was to take shipping for Nantes. Their only attendant was Bryan Mulcanie. He was to lead back Cornelius's horse, after taking leave of his former companion and play-fellow, of late years transformed more absolutely into his master. Bryan's devotion to Cornelius had been growing more and more every year, but his respect for him had for a long time increased in proportion. Cornelius was greatly attached to him: he thought he possessed one of the most feeling hearts possible, and the bitterest sensation he had on leaving home, was a fear of the effect which his departure would produce on this faithful creature. He saw, as he thought, that poor Bryan was making a fierce struggle with his emotions, for not a symptom of regret had been yet visible, if it was not when just as Cornelius tore himself from the embraces of his weeping nurse the mother of Bryan, the latter could not restrain his tears, but flung himself for an instant into the open arms where Cornelius's retreat had left a void. But soon recovering himself, he was busy in strapping and bridling portmanteaus and horses; and as the party trotted slowly along towards the place of embarkation, he was the only one whose features showed no trace of care.

The parting between Cornelius and his father was such as befitted

a first separation. It would have worn a different aspect had they been aware of what their next meeting would be. Cornelius stepped on board, his father mounted his horse at the sea-side, and thus they parted. But while our hero stood on the deck, and marked his parent ride away, followed by Bryan, the deep sighs which were heaving up his breast, like the billows that lifted the ship upon their bosom, were counterbalanced and checked by a feeling of disappointment and almost of indignation, as he reflected on the indifferent air with which the long cherished foster-brother had borne their separation. Cornelius had been looking for the outbursting of his uncultured emotions, and as he saw him bustling about, busying himself in the ship, and talking to the sailors, he was sure that the sequel to these artificial constraints would have been a scene of painful excess. But Bryan did not shed a tear. When his young master, scarcely able to suppress his own, stretched out his hand to him, he shook it cordially, and as Cornelius with a broken voice bade him farewell, and hoped that they might meet again, his answer was simply, "Troth and i hope we will, Sir—Long life to you Master Cornelius!" and he threw him a nod as he put his foot on the stirrup, which said nothing more nor less than the most common-place "Good bye!"

The sun was down, and the sharp air of an evening late in April curled the surface of the sea, and forced the mimic breakers against the pier close to which the vessel lay. Cornelius as he lost sight of his father had no inducement to remain on deck. He went down to his birth, and his last reflection as he stepped below was given to the uncertainty of friendship and affection. "Good God," cried he, "if the unsophisticated youth—this untaught companion of my earliest hours—bound to me by so many ties of gratitude and love—can part from me thus unconcerned, what am I to expect from the heartless connections of society! Can I reckon on any friendship after this? It is a bitter lesson—but a good one perhaps, on the threshold of the world!"

In an hour the ship had left her mournings, and she swept gallantly on her course with a favoring breeze.

CHAPTER V.

On the evening of the third day the coast of France was in sight, Ushant, and the sand heaps, which seemed rising from out of the shore, and looked red in the reflection of the setting sun. The sailing had been hitherto smooth and pleasant, and Cornelius, being the

only passenger, had had the little cabin entirely to himself, and the deck nearly so. He had enjoyed this short and solitary voyage. He had felt, or fancied, his mind to acquire fresh power in the sensation of singleness forced on him by this new position. He liked the idea of being alone in the world; and he felt as if he could track his course through it, impelled by the breath of Fate, as freely as the barge he sailed in cut its way through the waters, under the influence of the breeze that urged it on. He stretched himself in his berth this third night, rather more disappointed than gratified at the announcement of the master, that they should anchor in the Loire the next morning. This calculation was, however, unfulfilled. A sudden squall came on at midnight, followed by a total change of wind and a heavy gale. At day-break, when Cornelius went on deck, the little vessel had changed her course. She was standing out to sea, and a thick haze shut out the view of the shore. He was pleased at this new turn in the tide of events. He liked the prospect of the sea in this novel aspect, so different from the in-shore experience which he had hitherto had of storms. He kept the deck for two days while they labored through what is called the Chops of the Channel, and almost the only object that took off his attention from the observation of clouds and billows was one of the sailors, the youngest of the scanty crew, whom he remarked to pay repeated, and evidently stolen visits to the hold, with, at first, constant supplies of food, and afterwards with every thing to be had likely to bring any alleviation to the sufferings of sickness, such as pork broth, some tea warmed in a greasy saucepan, and other remedies quite as unpalatable. Cornelius, pleased with the lad's humanity, questioned him as to the object of his care, but received for an answer in a hesitating tone, that it was nothing but a dog that he had brought over unknown to the Captain, and he entreated our hero's secrecy, which was faithfully promised. As the voyage and gale continued, Cornelius compassionated the poor animal below, for he frequently heard as he thought, the low-moaned utterings of its distress. A piteous whine used sometimes to murmur through the water-casks, as if the suffering brute was conscious of its concealment, and now and then when the captain was buised in a distant part of the deck, and that the young sailor could slip towards the prison-house, and whisper a word of kindness below, Cornelius fancied that he heard the dog howl freely at one of the port-holes that opened on the starboard side of the ship.

This voyage did not last long enough to make it monotonous. Another day enabled the captain to bear up for Dieppe; and the weather was tolerably calm and dry when the vessel shot past the pier, and under the guidance of a pilot who had come out to meet her, she ran safely up to the quay, and came to quiet anchorage. Before even they had crossed the bar and entered the harbor, a boat had come alongside, and been fastened by a rope to the ship, by the custom-house and police-officers with which it was filled. Four or five of these were soon on the deck, demanding from the captain, a rough, round, little Irishman with a red face, a state of his crew and other papers; knowing these formalities, he had prepared himself

the required documents, and handed them a list containing his own name, those of six men, and the before-mentioned lad who composed the crew, as well as that of our hero, the sole passenger. This was strictly examined, and the persons mentioned scrutinized one by one. Some questions next followed as to cargo, which the captain answered by pointing to his bills of lading and certificates; and to some other enquiries he replied, with rather a choleric tone and strong gestures of discontent; "me no savez, me no savez," which rather dubious phrase constituted his whole stock of that mixture of languages approaching the nearest to French. The smiles of the officers irritated him exceedingly, and when Cornelius interrupted their next inquiry, "whether there were any contraband goods on board?" the little captain's indignation was excessive, and he used sundry violent and abusive terms as they went down to make a thorough search, beginning at the cabin. There they found nothing; but as they prepared to descend into the hold, our hero observed that the countenance of the young sailor showed considerable confusion and agitation. He thought that it was more than was called for by the discovery of a dog, even if it had been contraband, and he began to fancy that there was something more serious about this circumstance than had appeared at first. The officers went down—the young sailor stood silent, but with his looks earnestly straining after them—and in a few minutes two of them came upon deck, declaring that "all was right." The lad seemed to breathe more freely; but was in an instant more agitated than ever, when one of those who remained below hallowed out in a loud voice for the captain, as he was sure that there was some person concealed in the hold. "What does he say?" cried the captain to Cornelius. "What does he say?" echoed the young sailor. Cornelius told them. "He lies, d—n him!" cried the captain. "I am ruined entirely, out and out!" sobbed the boy. Cornelius stepped forward, rather interested in the scrutiny, and feeling an instant conviction that this youth had most probably carried away with him some sweetheart from the Irish coast whom he hoped to smuggle over undiscovered, a very common occurrence with sailors, particularly of that nation. Upon calling to mind the plaintive sounds which he had listened to for the last two days, Cornelius was convinced they had proceeded from a human being. He was only astonished at his dulness in having suffered himself to be deceived. The particular nature of his surprise may then be imagined, when he saw lugged upon deck, between two of the searchers, the almost inanimate and totally exhausted figure of Bryan Mulcahie. Sea-sickness and confinement had given him a most cramped and cadaverous look. His face was pale, and his limbs were quite distorted. But as the fresh air blew upon him he seemed instantaneously revived, and when the officers loosened their hold, he threw himself at the feet of his astonished master, clung to his knees, and blubbered out prayers for forgiveness and protection. Our hero looked on in a mixture of contending feelings, surprise, pleasure, and compassion being uppermost. The officers stormed, blasted, bellowed, thundered; and muttered threats of confiscation, imprisonment, the galleys, and the gallows. The little

captain was almost stifled with wonder and rage. The culprit sailor was confessing, and crying, and supplicating. The whole scene was one of extreme confusion, and to our hero of considerable interest. "Good heaven," cried he to Bryan, "what persuaded you to take this step and endure all this misery?"

"Och, blur an' ouns! Master Cornelius, and is it you thal's after axing me that? Did you think then I was going to come for to lave you—to go all alone by yourself into a strange country, with nobody at all at all to look after you? Ah, little it is that you know of me, if you suspect me of such a dirty turn!"

"But to leave your mother in this way, Bryan! Did you tell her of your intention?"

"Why then what the devil do you take me for, Master Cornelius? Tell her agnah! Troth and it's me that did'nt. Sorrow's the word I spoke to the poor ould crathur, good or bad, but that kiss that I give her when we were having the ould Castle—God's luck be wid it, and wid her too—and wid the master—and wid—"

"And my father—you told him, did you?"

"Why then I tould nobody at all, I tell you, Master Cornelius. What's the use of your wanting to make me out a fool? Troth I left the poor master trotting along towards home by himself, and dropped back a little, pretending I was crying after your honor, and that's the way I slipt back and came aboard, never saying nothing to no one but Jemmy Toole there, the cabin-boy, who promised to give me my passage, lodging, aiting, and drinking, free gratis, for nothing at all—and the devil a much more it was worth, to spake God's truth of it—so you see, sir, I'll not cost you a farthing after travelling so far together."

Cornelius was of a different opinion, for he foresaw a great deal of trouble in the affair, the officers becoming every moment more clamorous. He explained to them the whole circumstances of the case, but produced little effect upon them, for they were disposed to treat the business almost as seriously as if it had been a matter of high treason. Cornelius saw nothing for it but to submit to all that might happen, and he was on the point of consenting to the captain, the cabin-boy, and Bryan being marched on shore, prisoners of state, when the latter called out to our hero, "Why then, blur an' age, Master Cornelius, why don't you show them your commission? What the devil's the good of your being a captain, if you can't have a sarvent to follow you without his being clapped into jail like a common rogue? Och then, to the devil I pitch such a thieving country, if that's the way wid it."

Cornelius took the hint—avowed his situation—and saw in an instant the immense value of the consequence which is given by common consent from all the subalterns of government to those whom they consider as making part of the system. The whole affair was arranged on the spot; Bryant's name added to the muster-roll as the servant of Cornelius; Jemmy Toole absolved of crime, and rewarded into the bargain by our hero; the captain acquitted of connivance; the formalities of disembarkation facilitated; the passports of Cornelius and his domestic made out, and both of them, that very evening, pursuing their route to—

wards Versailles, one of them on the roof, and the other inside of the carriage that conveyed the government courier, who was to deliver his despatches at the court the following morning.

Cornelius's reflections on taking possession of this place in the carriage were of a nature far different from those with which he had commenced his sea voyage. The devoted attachment of Bryan, his voluntary exile from his native land, his abandonment of his mother, and his cheerful endurance of the miseries he had already suffered, were ample guarantees for his future fidelity. Our hero felt his thoughts to flow, as it were, in a different channel. He blamed the selfish and cynical turn of mind that he had been cherishing for some days past, and he looked forward into life, convinced that the finer feelings of the heart must form the chief delights of its unexplored mysteries. Bryan was so tired from the effects of the voyage, and from a most hearty meal to which his recovered appetite did ample justice in landing, that he slept soundly all night; and both master and man were astonished when they found themselves, about eight o'clock the next morning, fairly entering the suburbs of Versailles, and thus at the end of their journey, before they had time almost to mark its progress, or adjust themselves to its commencement.

The sudden arrival into the heart of a foreign land, amidst a strange people and a new climate, where every thing wears an air of novelty that almost seems unnatural, is to every one a matter of much marvel. But to one of Cornelius's frame of mind it was something more than that. He seemed to himself to have been magically wafted into a new state of being. Bryan was stupified; and gazed and gaped and listened with open eyes and mouth and ears.

The morning of this arrival formed a memorable epoch in the annals of France. It was the 4th of May, 1789, the day previous to the final assembling of the States General. The season bore a strict analogy to the state of the political world, for it was the spring-time of hope to all the thinking part of mankind. The principle of morality had been rapidly spreading across the earth, and under its broad and sheltering wings of the States General of France were now assembling, to regenerate society and place men and monarchs in the relative positions which they ought to occupy for each other's good. It was a grand experiment; and the pulse of the world beat high, but steadily in expectation of the result. Necker, the minister who planned the assembly, was lauded and condemned—accused and almost deified—according to the varying passions and wishes of men. The fact is, that Necker acted wisely and well. His mental vision was far-seeing but not omniscient; and he was as one who gazes on the wide expanse of ocean, but may not penetrate the under-currents which wind beneath its surface. The state of things called out for the experiment, and it was about to be tried under the most splendid auspices. The world was all excitement and agitation—a crisis was prepared; every thing promised fair and well. The people knew and claimed their rights. Louis, the representative of European monarchy, neither hoped nor wished to retain his unnatural power. The well-being of the world was at issue—wisdom did all that it could calculate—but, as must ever be the case in public projects, the rest was left to chance.

Nothing could exceed the splendor of the preparations made at Versailles on this occasion. The whole population of Paris and the country for leagues around poured into this town, which was the seat of government and the scene of this unrivalled exhibition. The concourse was prodigious. The houses were decorated with every possible symbol of joy. Festoons of flowers hung graciously across the streets. Every garden was rifled of its treasures, and the earliest roses of the season were profusely scattered abroad. Arches of triumph and altars were constructed in the open places; and every nook hung out its piece of carpet, its white flag, or its bouquet, in humble effort to do honor to the king, and the representatives of a people, willing to be ruled, and worthy of being free.

The official situation of Cornelius, and the courier with whom he travelled, ensured him a passage through the wide and early crowded streets—and he was enabled freely to gaze on the splendid avenues, tree-planted at each side, and the noble ranges of houses, of a style of architecture superbly novel to his observation. They passed with a rapid pace towards the palace, where the offices of the ministers were held; and the admiration of our hero, as they hurried through the throng, was equalled by its astonishment at the picture of grotesque and stupified amazement presented by Bryan Mulcahie, as he sat perched with wondering looks on the top of the cabriolet. To prove the near affinity of the ludicrous with the magnificent, Cornelius's reflections on all that surrounded him, were irresistibly mingled with the recollections of his servant's costume, a large grey frize coat thrown loosely over a jacket and waistcoat of the same stuff, with corduroy breeches and a pair of rude gaiter, partially showing his dark blue wollen stockings—the ordinary undress of Bryan while performing his out-doot work at the Castle, and the only suit with which he thought of providing himself on his abrupt departure. Our hero's first care, therefore, on taking possession of the apartment, to which he was immediately appointed in the barracks of the Garde-du-Corps, after presenting himself to the commandant of his troop, was to send for a tailor to furnish Bryan with a suit of livery, and he left him with strict injunctions not to leave the room until his return. This affair, and the operation of unpacking, dressing, breakfasting, and settling their new quarters, had occupied some hours, and it was more than noon when Cornelius set out to throw himself amongst the crowd, and gaze, in that solitude, on the mass of splendid wonders around him. He resolved not to attempt any visit at such a time to any of those to whom he had letters; preferring to mingle with the observers of what was going on, and taking chance for being satisfied in the scanty enquiries which he was inclined to make—for the amazement with which he was filled, seemed to raise him above the pettiness of detail.

Following the course of the living tide, he was soon in the great space opposite the front entrance of the palace; and gaining an elevation close to the balustrade, he had time afforded him for a hurried glance over the almost interminable crowd of heads which rose and sunk as the waving population moved along. The three vast avenues leading up to the palace, from different points of entrance to the town, were crowded to ex-

cess ; horsemen and carriages slowly made their way along the middle of these wide spaces, and the trees just throwing forth their foliage in the profusion of an early spring gave an air of bright enjoyment to the scene. Beyond rose the wood of Sartory, on whose verdant mosses the eye of our hero reposed for a moment, but no more. For at this instant the procession of the royal family, the ministers, and household, and the twelve hundred deputies to the States General, began to move from the palace towards the church, where they went to hear mass, and receive a blessing and offer up prayers, previously to their solemnly assembling on the morrow—all of which were ineffectual for their future good. As the trumpets flourished, and the drums rolled, and the cannons fired, and the people shouted, Cornelius seemed to rise superior to his former state of being. He breathed an atmosphere of sensations unknown to him before ; but while he revelled in this new state of excitement, and felt himself as it were identified with these bursts of national delight, a sudden shock threw his memory back upon the desolate contrast which his native land presented to his mind. He had no time however for the indulgence of this mood. The shiftings of thought were too frequent for reflection. The procession began its march : and Cornelius fixed his looks upon the pompous parade of heralds, and ushers, in their gaudy trappings, and supposed that they must have formed the representatives of all the grandeur of the state. The busy murmurings of the crowd soon told him of his error, and he learned from the garrulous by-standers all the particulars of the pageant. He saw the noblesse first pass by him, in their splendid apparel of cloth and gold, with white plumes waving proudly, and their brilliance dazzling the beholders—but little importance was attached to the wearers by the people, who had learned to appreciate the true nature of the illustrious obscurity into which this class had fallen. Next came the clergy in their silks and lace and cambric, their white or pink or purple robes failing to command the reverence of the mob, which had been alienated from its former devotion to appearances and forms, not less by the free spirit that was abroad, than by the dissolute conduct and political intrigues of the priesthood. When the deputies of the people advanced, the people seemed to feel their own importance, and shouts of acclamation rose wildly from the throng. The six hundred members of the *tiers-etat* marched past with steady steps and confident looks. Their short black coats and cloaks of the same color with their long white muslin cravats, formed a costume, the simplicity of which seemed to give additional dignity to their deportment. But of all the individuals of this order, one was conspicuous on that day—by his haughty bearing, as well as by his long flowing hair, and marked yet forbidding countenance, which possessed the double faculty of attraction and repulsion. It was Mirabeau ; his name was shouted by the mob, but they seemed to shrink from him while they applauded ; and their voices died away imperfectly, as if he awed while he inspired them.

Cornelius was raised to a pitch of excitement which seemed to have reached its utmost height. He had been ignorant of the existing events in France. He was well read and well informed on its past and present state, and while he inherited from his father all his principles of attachment to the reigning monarch, his heart bounded with-

in him as he heard the shouts of an emancipated people ringing in his ears. The approach of the household troops recalled him from his flight, for he felt himself to be one of them virtually, though not practically yet; and the anxious but decorous buzz of the crowd was followed by the appearance of the King and Queen, side by side, followed by his sister Madame Elizabeth, his brothers, and the Duke of Orleans. The trainings of the crowd to get a near view of these chief objects of curiosity forced our hero close to them; for he sturdily preserved the position which chance had given him in the very front of the throng. As the King came near, the enthusiasm of the beholders became tumultuous. The respectful murmur which had whispered his approach, rose by degrees into shouts that might have awoken the echoes of the distant wood. The multitude from behind pressed forward in hopeless and uncalculating efforts to get a glimpse of the monarch, who at this moment stood on the summit of his popularity. The guard and *gens-d'armes* vainly endeavored to keep back the crowd. The near presence of the King forbade the least effort to use force against their encroachments, and for some minutes every barrier was broken down, and the march of the procession completely stopped. Cornelius looked on the King with a feeling which at first was awe, but he soon turned from his calm and common-place countenance. He involuntarily compared its heavy and talentless expression with Mirabeau's imperious and audacious glance; but while the instantaneous comparison was glancing across his mind, his eye fell full upon and became rivetted on another person close beside him, the drapery of whose silk robe actually rustled against him as he stood. It was the Queen.

Marie Antoinette was at that period in the very prime of her beauty, in the plenitude of her power, without question the most interesting woman in Europe. There was something in the unbending energy of her spirit which astonished and enchanted the world. Her vivacity, through which continually burst proofs of deep feeling and a generous mind, softened down the harsh impression which would have been made by her courage, had it been allied to a cold and repulsive manner. Her personal charms were formed to captivate, and her character to secure the admiration of mankind. She had therefore the most devoted servants in all those attached to her person; and those only were her enemies, who were influenced by political causes, or by some prejudice which was hurt by her conduct towards them. No queen had ever greater difficulties to contend with; the sources of which may be shortly enumerated. A despotic and haughty mother, a selfish and intriguing tutor, a neglected education, a husband insensible to her worth, and incapable of bringing it to perfection—unbending political enemies—and a lively, easy disposition. In that short list may be comprised the causes of her faults and her misfortunes. But the knowledge of those evils acted upon those who admired her character as a powerful stimulus for the increase of their attachment. Amongst those was our hero, who had long imbibed from his father the highest opinion of her heart, and the conviction of her purity; and it was with such feelings, called into unpremeditated action by her present position, that he now stood gazing upon her.

The countenance of Marie Antoinette possessed an uncommon union of sweetness and command; and the fashion of dress introduced by her was peculiarly adapted, and perhaps particularly chosen, for its advantageous display. Her hair was on the present occasion, as was usual, dressed in extravagant profusion of height and curls, and her powdered tresses did not want beauty to the eyes accustomed to the disfigurement which a better taste has since abolished. Her high and ample forehead, white and polished, seemed to speak a proud and vigorous mind. Her bright blue eyes were filled with softness and vivacity combined; while the dignified expression of her aquiline nose, and the decisive tone given to her features by her somewhat projecting chin, were blended with the smiles of a mouth, bewitching and seductive beyond description. Her natural complexion was clear and brilliant, and heightened by the use of rouge; while the elegance and tastefulness of her dress accorded well with the mixed character of her beauty. There was never a more perfect union of the queen with the woman; nor an object more powerfully formed to insure the passionate homage of an enthusiast, such was our hero.* During the favorable, or I should rather say fatal, interval, in which Cornelius thus uninterruptedly gazed upon her personal charms, and figured to himself the perfection of her mental attributes, the fate of his future life was sealed; and, filled with emotions whose nature he dared not attempt to analyze, he felt convinced that an idol was thus raised up for his everlasting adoration.

The interruption given to the procession, and the clamorous applause of the crowd, seemed for an instant to ruffle the calmness of the King, for he looked round him hurriedly and even wistfully, as if he suspected something sinister, or wished to assure himself that all was right. The expression of the Queen's countenance was also changed, but it was into one of haughty firmness, the natural effect of imagined danger on the faces of the brave. She stood steadily, holding the King's arm with a grasp that seemed meant to give not demand security. But there was really nothing to apprehend: the irruption of the crowd into the regulated limits of the procession proceeded purely from their over-zealous attachment to the King, and the air resounded with his name. *Vive le Roi!* was shouted almost stunningly into his ears; while only a few faint voices joined, *et la Reine!* Cornelius heard the clamor, but his mind was too much absorbed to mark the distinction which was evidently observed—painfully and proudly—by the Queen. Her face showed a dignified indifference of the popular voice—a fatal and deep-rooted error in her character. The negative dispraise, conveyed by the slight mention of her name, produced no further positive effect upon her; but just when the obstruction was removed and the procession resuming its

* Those who in the present day would wish to form a notion of the truth of this sketch, must consult the celebrated portrait by Madame Le Brun, in the Palace of St. Cloud, and a small bust in Sevres China, which stands in the *Foyer* of the *Salle de Spectacle* in the Palace of Versailles, and of which I do not know any duplicate.

march, a ruffianly fellow, who stood close to our hero, interrupted the somewhat increasing cry of "Long live the King and Queen!" by bawling out "No, no, the King and the Duke of Orleans!" At this brutal insult the whole soul of the indignant Queen seemed to mount into her eyes. She threw a glance of reproachful contempt upon the Ruffian, which, while it flashed by Cornelius, seemed half conveyed to him. In the roused state of his feelings at the moment he knew not what he did, but the natural impulse of his mind burst forth in a loud shout of "*Vive la Reine! Vive la Reine!*" he accompanied the cry by corresponding gestures of enthusiasm; and the whole surrounding concourse following the impulse thus given, burst into a general chorus of the inspiring exclamation. The Queen seemed electrically affected by the sudden change. Her eyes were suffused in tears—her forehead was covered with a glow of delight. Her lips quivered with emotion—and as she moved on with majestic step, she gracefully waved her hand to those around her, as she inclined her head and threw an eloquent smile towards our hero, whose animated interference she had minutely observed. The smile sank deep into his breast. He trembled from head to foot with excess of rapture, his eyes swam, and almost involuntarily he sunk on one knee, bowing down his head and stretching forth his arms as if to an object of religious homage. When the rush of the crowd forced him to rise up, a confused mass of guards and followers met his eye.

He gazed after the line of the procession, but he could distinguish nothing of her whom he sought. But his mind was filled with her, and he needed not her actual presence as an inspiration to his transported feelings. Oppressed by the crowd, he burst away from its obstruction; and reckless of his course, he wandered in the direction of the palace gardens. Passing through the court-yard, which was by this time free for the public, he walked hastily along, close by the chapel, without observing its architecture, or its stained glass windows, which formed a contrast, striking enough to common passers-by, with the old tasteless brick-work and gilding of the front face of the narrow-casemented low-roofed residence of the French King. Cornelius stepped through the side portico and paced the broad and gravelled way, without observing aught around him, until he reached the extremity of the terrace in front, and found himself on the first of the flights of broad steps, which lead down to the *Tapis vert*, the *bosquet*, and the park. His attention was arrested for an instant, and all his contemplations interrupted, by the extent and splendour of the scene. The masses of wood, the broad sheets of water, the wide walks, the numerous statues, the flowers and shrubs were all opened on his view, as if by magic. He turned round, and the whole extent of the facade of the royal structure, stretching out to the right and left, in all its vastness and splendor, seemed as if suddenly conjured up by some enchanter's wand.

This burst of magnificence was quite in unison with the "thick coming fancies," which filled the imagination of our hero. Such a palace and such a park, seemed suited to the one being who occupied his thoughts, and whatever he gazed on was seen through the medium of the adoration, which that being had so suddenly, but so irrevoc-

cally inspired. He moved along in a state of rapt abstraction, and saw every thing as it were enfolded in a veil of unreal excitement.

The throng from the streets and the church now began to pour into the park, and the water-works commenced their play. Discharges of artillery announced the return of the procession to the palace, and the moving thousands of spectators scattered in fluttering gaudiness through the parterres, lawns, and walks. The woods were alive with joyous groups which sported in the green places. The glittering trappings of the military mixed with the varied colored robes of innumerable fair forms. The waters from a hundred fountains rose towards the sky, caught the iris-forming sunbeams, which sported in a halo around each liquid column, and then fell in sparkling mists upon the bosom of the lakes. The miniature vessels had their sails outspread and swam at random on the water, while the swans swelled out their plumage, and seemed to float in proud rivalry of these artificial intruders. Music from many stations was sounding in the breeze; and green meadows, in the distance, contrasted with the mellow tints of the woods, till they were lost at the foot of a mass of fleecy clouds, which rose on the horizon in the fantastic semblance of a snow-covered mountain chain.

While Cornelius ranged this scene of fairy land, he had no disposition for its critical examination. He could not analyze the magnificent display, nor separate masses of grand effect, to cavil at clipped trees, straight walks, or formal flower pots. He wandered about without plan from avenue to avenue, through those delicious bosquets profusely planted in the park, and decorated each with some new ornament. In spite of his reveries he could not pass by without noticing the beautiful spot called the Baths of Apollo, where the marble figure of the God, sculptured into a resemblance of Louis XIV. with four nymphs, likenesses of the vain-glorious monarch's mistresses, all rest in a group of exquisite design, under the vault of rock-work, artificially massed in rivalry of nature's most romantic scenes; while the gush of waters from above flows down through overhanging shrubs and flowers, and after bathing the feet of the horses of the sun, which are tended by satyrs below; falls into an irregular grass-edged basin that can be scarcely believed the formation of art. Another of these tree-embosomed creations of pure taste which roused our hero's attention was the circular colonnade, surrounding the group which represents the Rape of Proserpine.—To this place he was attracted by the sounds of music, and in the centre of the open space he observed the musicians,—while the slightly elevated terrace and the steps leading to it were thronged with listeners, who walked through the double row of pillars, each one of a kind of marble different from its fellows—and heard the strains of music mix with the murmurs of the fairy fountains, which fell into broad basins in each interval between the columns.

While our hero thus listlessly loitered along, the noiseless wings of evening began to throw their shadow across the scene, and the sun flung his farewell beams around him as he sunk slowly behind the woods; the clouds were reflected in the lakes; and the countless windows of the palace glowed with the gorgeous mixtures of gold

and crimson hues. These signs of the close of day acted as usual upon the sensitive caution of a French crowd, and the assembled multitude hastily broke away, to take refuge in the heated fumes of the Cafes from the terrors of the delicious twilight air. Cornelius almost instinctively approached the palace—for there was but little of calculation in the notion that stole across his mind that he might again catch a view of the Queen. As he crossed the *Tapis vert*, a large grass-plot which stretches down to the borders of the lake, and listened to the gushing melody of the nightingales, he was aroused by sounds of tumult proceeding from one of the close alleys, and as he looked for explanation, a crowd approached him, composed of the straggling remains of idle company and several of the guardian officers of the park. The latter were hustling a man who struggled violently, and who raised such a dust around him as to prevent our hero from distinguishing his feature or dress, and whose screams were almost stifled by the threats and execrations of those who held him, and the loud bursts of laughter of the spectators. Cornelius prompted by a mixed impulse of curiosity and hatred of any thing that savored of oppression, pressed forward, and as he mingled with the throng, plainly distinguishing the hoarse cries of Bryan Mulcahie, who called aloud on his master, "Master Cornelius, Master Cornelius! where are you, where are you? let me go, you villains—where are you, where are you? oh you murdering thieves, do you want to choke me? and is it for this that I followed you to be murdered and robbed this way? Master Cornelius, Master Cornelius!"

The close of this sentence, which was uttered at the very top of poor Bryan's half cracked voice, was answered by a renewed volley of oaths from the guards, and roars of laughter from the crowd.—Cornelius could with difficulty restrain his desire of rushing to the rescue of his hapless fellower; but he was resolved to ascertain the nature of Bryan's offence before he committed himself by an inconsiderate interference. He therefore enquired of one of the bystanders, and learned that the culprit having entered the gardens, had begun roaring forth lustily in his barbarous English dialect, apparently for some companion whom he sought; that he instantly attracted the observation of the crowd, many of whom fled from him, supposing him some maniac; but the majority amused themselves by laughing at his grotesque costume and conduct, which so irritated Bryan, that he commenced a fierce attack upon those nearest to him, on which the guards interfered, and Bryan finding himself overpowered, had attempted an escape, and bounding across various flower-pots and other sacred places, was at last seized in the violated sanctuary of one of the queen's own arbors. At this detail Cornelius was somewhat puzzled how to act, but he thought it most wise to let the law of the place take its course, which he supposed would most naturally lead the prisoner to the guard house. He therefore accompanied the group, taking great care to conceal himself from the roaring Bryan. The guards led along towards the front terrace, and while they began to drag the prisoner up the steps, he made the most resolute struggles, taking a fresh position of defence on every

flight, and kicking with his nail embossed shoes against his conductors, whose shins must have been as hard as the marble they trod on. Showers of blows from the thin canes, and scratches from the open hands of the unscientific Frenchmen assailed poor Bryan; and Cornelius, unable longer to resist his feelings, was bursting through the crowd to assist him, when a priest of tall and gaunt figure, about forty-five years of age, attracted by the cries of the sufferer, threw himself before him and the guards, and seizing the two who throttled Bryan, one in each of his powerful hands, he shook them from their hold; while Bryan finding himself free, immediately sprung at them and struck them right and left, until their defenceless faces streamed with blood. The beholders, amazed and somewhat shocked at this contest, left the field open to the operation of the priest, who, while he shook the terrified guards with gigantic force, poured out on them his upbraidings in stentorian tones, for their cowardly treatment of a defenceless foreigner.

"Oh! ye thieving spalpeens!" cried Bryan, redoubling his blows

"Be aisy, my lad," interrupted the priest. "Let them alone and lave them to me; I'm Father O'Collogan, late of the Irish Brigade so don't be afraid of any harm coming to you; I'll take care of you body and soul both."

"Och! then long life to your reverence, if you be an Irishman, for I did not think there was another in it, barring Master Cornelius and myself—and I'm sartain sure these villains have murdered him."

Here the guards, with humble mien, but vociferous protestations, accused Bryan, and claimed him as their prisoner.

"Don't believe a word they say, your reverence," interrupted Bryan; "it's all lies from top to bottom. I did nothing at all, at all, but look for Master Cornelius, and gave a tap or two to the fellows that made faces at me, and broke an old flower pot when the thieves runned after me."

The guards here put in a rejoinder, swearing lustily that all Bryan's assertions were false; (although they no more understood him than he did them) and accusing him of having offended against the laws of good breeding, by interrupting the harmony of the place with his barbarous and brutal exclamations, knocking down a hair-dresser and a dancing-master who smiled at his extravagance, tearing up with his hoofs many most precious flowers, and rushing like a wild boar into the sacred recesses of the queen's favourite bouquet.

"It's all a lie, all a lie!" roared Bryan during this detail; "I was only looking for Master Cornelius."

Father O'Collogan assured the guards they should have every satisfaction, and while the whole party advanced in the direction of the palace, to reach the wing where the ranger of the park was to be found, he turned to Bryan and demanded what he meant by the frequent mention of "Master Cornelius."

"Main, your reverence? why I main that I was looking for Master Cornelius, my master, the son of the old master, Major ———, of the castle, that's all, your reverence."

"What is it you're after telling me?" asked the Priest sternly: "do

you want to persuade me that Cornelius, the son of my friend the Major, would be here in Versailles without coming to see me? I believe you're a bit of a big blackguard, and a liar into the bargain."

"It's God's truth I tell you, saving your reverence's presence," blubbered Bryan, unable longer to restrain his tears, "and I'm as innocent as the babe unborn."

"Where is your master then?" asked the priest.

"I dunna where the devil he is, please your honor, if these villians hav'nt murdered him, as they thought to do me." A burst of grief followed this speech.

"If you're telling truth," cried Father O'Collogan, "I'll find him out for you, dead or alive, never fear that."

Cornelius, who attentively listened to this colloquy, was now on the point of advancing to introduce himself to Father O'Collogan, in hopes of terminating the affair; when the whole party, which had advanced close up to the palace in its way towards the court yard, was stopped by a servant in the royal livery, who advanced quickly from beside a group of ladies and gentlemen, who were walking immediately in front of the open windows. The domestic announced himself as a forerunner of a chamberlain, sent by the queen herself, who was in the group just mentioned, and who, having observed the prominent figure of the priest in this crowd was curious to know the particulars of what was passing. While Father O'Collogan put his ruffled camsock and band in order, and by the interference of his bony fingers rather increased than rectified the confusion of his powdered curls, and while the guards decorously wiped away from their faces the marks of Bryan's sanguinary attacks, the chamberlain aforesaid, in full dress, advanced with a courtier-like and mincing steps, and holding his sword and hat gracefully under one arm, he shook perfumes from his cambric handkerchief, as he enquired into the nature of this tumultuous proceeding, under the very windows of the palace.

Father O'Collogan began most fluently and energetically to explain the affair, advocating poor Bryan's cause, and pronouncing him entitled to a full pardon on the score of his ignorance of French etiquette, and his slight experience in the intercourse of civilized society. But before the priest's harangue had nearly come to a close, and Marie Antoinette herself, with that condescending grace, which, had she been queen of England would have enthroned her in the people's hearts, but which the French were incapable of appreciating, instantly entered into enquiry, and learned from the mouth of the undaunted priest the whole circumstances of the case. As Cornelius stood gazing upon her, he forgot every thing but her, and the enquiry was carried on unattended to by him. He thought that fate seemed to have thus thrown him into the presence of the queen, twice in one day, as if to sanction the adoration with which he viewed her; and she appeared to him now, in her undress, and freed from the splendid but formal trappings of the morning, a thousand times more beautiful than she had been then. Having attentively listened to Father O'Collogan's harangue in explanation of Bryan's situation relative to our hero, she recommended the dismissal of the prisoner, under the priest's safe convoy; and telling the guards to

be satisfied, she ended by expressing a hope that the young *Garde-du-Corps* would be soon found to come forward, to enter on his own duties, and keep his servant within the bounds of his.

Cornelius hearing these concluding words, felt irresistibly impelled to avow himself, and advancing from the crowd, he bent forward, and declared that he was the master of the offender, for whose future propriety he vouched; at the same time professing his gratitude for her majesty's gracious interference. The queen instantly recognised our hero.—She bowed and smiled—little imagining the fatal consequence of the smile on him, into whose heart it found immediate entrance.

"It is well," said the queen, turning away; and she added to her beautiful companion, the Princess Lamballe, "this young Irishman will not disgrace the ranks of the *Garde-du-Corps*."

"He is superb," replied the princess, "and worthy to serve such a mistress."

"It's him! it's him! sure enough," exclaimed Bryan, the moment he caught sight of our hero. "Och, Master Cornelius, how could you serve me such a turn? Did you ait any thing? The devil a morsel entered your mouth, I'll be bound for it, since breakfast, and it's pass seven o'clock. For the love of Jesus, come home, and get some dinner, for I'm starving alive wid the exercise I took thumping these French thieves here: the devil's the lie in it. Here's Father O'Collogan, Master Cornelius, he'll tell you all about it if you don't believe me."

Upon this introduction, our hero and his father's old friend and companion commenced their personal acquaintance: Cornelius excused himself from the reproaches of the good priest, by telling him the circumstances of his recent arrival, and his reasons for avoiding an instantaneous intrusion; and Father O'Collogan proposing to accompany him to his barracks, to receive his father's letter, and to pass the remainder of the evening with him, they set out together for Cornelius's quarters, close followed by Bryan, who defended the impatience which brought him out in search of his master, and was pursued by a long train of followers, who could not resist the attraction of a last view of the wild Irishman.

The evening passed quickly, to the apprehension of the worthy priest, who talked fluently to Cornelius on a thousand topics, past, present, and future, made numberless enquiries for his old companions, related various anecdotes of their former intercourse, and touched deeply on our hero's duties in his new station, and on the political aspect of the times. Cornelius, on his part, thought the evening would never end. The garrulity of his companion, and the loud snoring of Bryan, who, by his master's orders, went to his early bed, in a nook outside the anti-room, were equally annoying. His mind, full of one great object, was harassed by the comparatively petty subjects which Father O'Collogan touched on so abundantly. It was not till the latter mentioned the queen, that his hitherto reluctant listener could even assume an interest in his remarks; but when her name and situation became the topic, he gave an intense attention to all that was said.

"Aye," said the priest solemnly, "aye, and this beautiful creature of a queen, who might be thought, from her condescension and good-

ness, to be an angel, even she will suffer, I'll warrant it, from these very States General. It's hard to say what one must expect in the time that's before us; but take my word for it, the poor thing has reason to look with a heavy heart and heavy eye, on what's coming to pass,

'Le tems present est gros de l'Avenir.'—

To-day to our sorrow
'S with child of to-morrow,

as the poet says, and a devil of a troublesome child that same morrow will be, I'm sore afraid."

"I hope, my dear Sir," said Cornelius, "that your forebodings are unfounded, and that you see things too much in the shade.—Surely every appearance of this day promises happiness and greatness to the country, the king and the queen."

"Don't be too sure of that, my dear boy," replied the priest;—"you don't know the ill will that's working against her at any rate. Every thing bad, I tell you once more, is to be expected from these States General, and the turn the public mind is taking. We may say with Horace

'Grave virus mundities pellet;'

That is, putting it in the future,

The poison spreads, and soon will ate
Each healthy portion of the state.

"Why it's even reported about the palace, that at the procession this very day, a creature of that bad madman, the Duke of Orleans, insulted her majesty grossly, and was even going to strike her, till he was knocked down by a young Irishman may be; for that's more like."

"It is false, my good Sir," exclaimed Cornelius; "no one could be monster enough to dream of, much less attempt such an outrage."

"And how do you know that," asked the priest quickly.

"Because I was there, on the spot.—Because in fact, I was—I was—"

"You were the young foreigner that knocked the fellow down," interrupted Father O'Colloghan, "I see it all with half an eye.—It was you then! Oh, the blood of my friend the Major is boiling in your fine full veins! You knocked him down, the thief!"

"No, my dear Sir," protested Cornelius, "no such a thing I assure you."

"Yes, but you did though—I know better nor you.—Don't deny it—never be ashamed of a good action. It was your bounden duty as a Christian. Where did you hit him, tell me?"

Before our hero could put another negative on the priest's assertion, a knock at the door interrupted the discussion, and the adjutant

of the troop to which Cornelius was appointed, entered with a message from the Colonel, who had just returned from the queen's private party, intimating that as a complete muster of the troop would be required to attend the king on the morrow, for the opening of the States General, he expected that Cornelius would be ready to follow the parade as a supernumerary. The new recruits expressed his readiness to obey, but at the same time lamented his want of a suit of uniform, as well as his total ignorance of manœuvres and parade discipline. "All that I will take upon myself," replied the adjutant: "one of your brother guardsmen has promised to lend you a suit which will fit you, and I shall expect nothing from you, but to follow the march of the troop without joining in its movements."

After these words the adjutant was retiring, when Father O'Collogan addressed him; and it will be recollected by my readers, that the priest spoke French in a different style from English. "Yes, yes, adjutant, depend upon it he shall attend. I see the whole matter clearly. The queen has desired the Colonel to have him present."—

"Oh, Monsieur l'Abbe!" exclaimed the adjutant

"For God's sake, my dear Sir!" cried Cornelius.

"Never mind, gentlemen, I tell you both, she did—I know the way of the sex, and I know the way of the queen—and she is right to like to have before her eyes this fine young fellow, Mr. Adjutant, that knocked down the scoundrel who insulted her this morning at the procession."

"Why, is this indeed the gentleman?" demanded the adjutant anxiously.

"To be sure it is," reiterated the priest; and before Cornelius could say a word more in denial, the adjutant precipitately retired, and in a few minutes returned with above a dozen of the guards, whom he brought back with him to introduce to the gallant comrade, who had already signalized himself as the champion of their idolized mistress. Denial and protestation were useless on the part of our hero, and asseveration was not wanted, though freely offered, on the part of the priest, to rebe him in a reputation which we can scarcely call unmerited. In an hour Cornelius's imagined conduct was bruited through the barracks; and before the parade time next morning, almost all the royalist population of Versailles had got the story, and his name in their mouths. He was thus already a marked man.

CHAPTER VI.

The following day, the 5th of May, 1789, was one of those delusive epochs in the calendar of a kingdom's fate, whose arrival is hailed by the world with enthusiasm proportioned to the good it promises, and which is looked back on with sentiments of profound contempt for the shallow calculations of mankind. At that period France stood immensely high in the scale of national greatness. Her conduct was the polar star of European guidance ; and it depended on her to secure the liberties of the world by her moderation, as she had up to that moment advanced them by her firmness. At the assembling of the States General, all Europe was imbued with the spirit of freedom, and even its most powerful despots, Catherine, Frederick, and Joseph, had either promulgated or patronized liberal opinions, and were ready to adopt the course of constitutional independence which seemed to be preparing in France. But all the bright views of philanthropy were deceived, and its justified hopes destroyed, by the inebriate fury of a faction, and the national degradation of the mass. Liberty was strangled in her cradle ; and the phantom fiend which sprung up in her place, betrayed its spuriousness by the rapidity of its growth, and terrified the world by the giant strides which trampled down the fresh-springing flowers of genuine freedom.

It cannot be doubted that Louis XVI. participated fully in the general wish for the reformation of abuses, and the establishment of a constitution. His great object was to see his subjects contented, even at the expense of his prerogative. But it is as certain, that Marie Antoinette had different notions. She wished the people well, but she would have preserved the power of making them so ; of retailing to them individually their indulgencies at her pleasure ;—the wholesale happiness to be given to them, by deductions from her own or husband's privileges, was not consistent with her views. Cradled in despotism, and fostered by flattery, she had not force of mind sufficient to see the value, or the necessity of sacrifices. She possessed a vigorous character rather than a strong intellect ; and while the king, from his softness, would yield one by one, the powers which he inherited, she clung to each with a tenacity, which, contrasted with his weakness, made him appear contemptible, and herself odious, in the eyes of the people. But these results of their unsympathising dispositions, were not developed till after the period before us. When the States General met together, the king was most popular, and the queen not hated.

The spectacle of that day was the finest that had been witnessed in France for ages. Louis was seated on the throne glittering in gold and jewels, the princes of the blood around him ; the queen, the princesses, and the ladies of the court, in magnificent dresses, gracing the side galleries of the hall, and its body filled with the nobles, and the clergy, and the representatives of the people ; altogether forming a

rare combination of outward splendour and moral greatness. The speech of the king was well composed, well delivered, and enthusiastically received. But Cornelius, who by the special favor of his colonel, was placed so as to have a full view of this remarkable assembly, paid but little regard to the oration of the king or the ministers. His mind was absorbed in the contemplation of the queen, who sat silently, and as our hero thought, sadly, looking down on the assembled elements, and many of the agents of her after misery. Whether a boding of ill, or a sense of degradation acted on her then, it would be hard to say; but we can scarcely think of her in the solitude of her recorded emotion on that day of general joy, without fancying her to have had some prophetic glance into the horrid futurity of her fate. Cornelius thought of the priest's prognostications, and he almost shuddered as he gazed on the grandeur around him. He followed the royal family to the palace, with the troop which escorted them, and urged by the ardour of his feelings, and the intuitive desire to gain one glance of recognition, he pressed close to the carriage from which the queen descended; but she had no thoughts for him, or the many devoted followers who surrounded her that day. Who can say what occupied her mind?

As Cornelius wound slowly back to his barracks in the rear of the guard, he felt a depression of spirits unexperienced ever until then. The day before that very morning, as well as during the sleepless night that intervened, he had known a buoyancy of heart, of a nature undefinable and vague; but perhaps more delightful than more positive sensations. These were the earliest hours of that one deep attachment, which almost all men experience—so unlike the fugitive visitings of common love—when the heart of the enthusiast acknowledges an impression, which it is unable to comprehend, and never may forget. The delicious reveries of those hours, in which the mind cannot think, nor the eyes close,—when appetite is dead, and every thing a dreamy enchantment—are only broken by some painful sympathy with her who gave them birth; and the chain of visioned abstractions is snapped by some touch of actual feeling, which she alone can create.

Cornelius paced his room that evening with an air of deep depression. He appeared to himself to have suddenly started from the delusions of sleep, and he entered on the task of self-examination with a degree of intense pain. He was amazed and shocked, as he called up in review the sensations of the last twenty-four hours.—He wished to doubt the reality of his feelings, for he shrunk back, and felt his face glow, when the remembrance of his daring thoughts was raised in evidence to his mind. The presumption of his aspirations, even to be noticed or known by the queen of France, appeared to him to merit contempt and punishment. He felt as if the whole world had pierced the secret, which he was afraid to acknowledge to himself. He sank on a chair, and covered his face with his hands, as he reflected in shame on the boldness with which he had gazed at, followed, and even spoken to her. He had heard in conversation amongst the guards that morning, of a gentleman who at that moment wandered about Versailles, harmlessly mad from love

of the queen. As the thought of this man returned upon Cornelius, he sprang from his seat, and felt his heart's blood run chill—for he feared that his senses too might have wandered, which alone might account for his audacious thoughts. But all the struggles of forced reasoning with an involuntary passion ended, as is usual, in the latter acquiring fresh force from every effort to suppress it. Cornelius, as his first emotion of self-reproach subsided, became convinced that though he ought not to imagine the probability of his loving the queen, he was bound in duty as well as inclination to be devoted to her wholly. And proud in the conviction that he had thus, in its early stage, shaken off the witchery that was stealing on his heart, he added one to the list of those self-deceivers, who believe reason to be more powerful than passion.

I have already stated that our hero had become a marked man, through the positive misconception of the part he acted at the procession. Every hour increased his notoriety; for father O'Collogan, in the true spirit of Irish friendship, talked unceasingly in his praise, and spread a hundred innocent untruths about him, which had their birth in the inventive fertility of the good priest's imagination. Amongst other things he told every body that "the queen, and small blame to her, sweet soul that she was, had taken a powerful fancy to the handsome young Irishman, as soon as ever she saw him knock down the fellow that was going to strike her; that she had come out on the terrace on purpose to look at him that evening, and natural it was; that she had made the colonel insist on his joining the parade the next morning, and for sure had looked more at, and thought more about him, than about the States General—fine a sight as it was."

All these absurd exaggerations came quite natural to Father O'Collogan. He believed every word of them, and meant any thing but evil to the queen. He thought nothing was more natural or more innocent, and therefore more certain, than her strong partiality for our hero—and all the rest of his conclusions followed in course.—And it was thus unfortunately that many of the best friends of Marie Antoinette struck death-blows to her reputation, which they would have died to uphold. Every enemy, every scandal-monger, every babbler of the town, caught each absurd report, and echoed it around; and amongst others equally false, it was now loudly asserted that she had formed a violent liking to the young Irishman; and the vile fancies of the public set no bounds to this imagined attachment.

Cornelius was most unconsciously an object of general observation. He became a subject for the envy, and of course the enmity of many of his brother guardsmen; and to the avowed enemies of the queen, who every day increased even among the military, he was a noted mark for injury or insult, whenever occasion might serve. He had inadvertently added to the calumnies which were abroad, by the reserved deportment at all times natural to him, but which was now increased from the state of the feeling by which he was absorbed. All this was set down to pride; and his late solitary walks in the park were attributed to other and more positive causes.

A month passed over in this manner, Cornelius, devoting himself with great ardor to the routine of his military instruction, was getting quickly through the early duties of a recruit; and when he walked the streets, or rode to the exercise ground, in his suit or handsome blue uniform, or when he attended at the evening parties to which he was invited in the palace or the town, in his full-dress coat richly laced with gold, with scarlet velvet breeches and silk stockings, he was allowed to be among the most striking of the handsome youths who at that time adorned the court of Versailles. He felt an elevation of spirit, from the noble incitement which urged him on, that raised his manners to a level with his mind; and he bore in his deportment the marks of a consciousness of some dignified thought and action. He sometimes saw the queen, during her promenade, or when he happened to be on duty at the palace; and laboring to convince him that he had stifled the first symptoms of a passion which he dared not indulge, he attributed to respectful zeal the throbbings of the heart, and swimming of the brain which oppressed him whenever she appeared. In his letters to his father he spoke with delight of his situation; touched slightly on public affairs, but never mentioned the queen. Neither did he speak of her in his intercourse with his comrades, or in society. But to Father O'Colloghan he freely talked of his devotion to her cause, of his admiration of her conduct, and with a warmth encouraged by the priest's continual assurances that he had found favor in the sight of his royal mistress; assurances which, while they were at the moment actually painful to our hero, worked their deep effect on his mind, and fostered the ambitious fervor of his unconfessed attachment.

During all this time poor Bryan felt himself very ill at ease. The fine laced livery and cocked hat in which he was decked sat ungracefully upon him, as he thought, and his inability to express his grievances was worse than the grievances themselves. A butt for the unceasing pranks and pleasantries of the old soldier-servant granted to Cornelius, he had little consolation. The military character of his master and his abstracted mein filled him with an increasing awe that threw him out of the way of common confidence, and his only relief was his occasional confessions to Father O'Colloghan. He used to talk to him about home, and "the ould master," and his "poor mother," and "the castle" and Ireland—until the good nature and patriotism of the warm-hearted priest would overflow in streams of the purest benevolence. As an employment to Bryan, whose only actual occupation was the cleaning of his master's horse, Father O'Colloghan recommended the study of the French language. Bryan faithfully promised, and worked hard to pick up a word here and there, and his progress may be judged of, from his having told his master at the end of a month, that "he knew very well how to ax for a bit and a sup, for *dillo* was water, and *mungey* meant aiting."

Among the acquaintances formed at Versailles, was a young man of about his own age, named Armand. This youth was well known as the protege of the queen, who had picked him up a child in one of her drives, adopted him with the consent of his parents, who were

poor cottagers, and had him reared and educated with all the indulgence and luxury common to the children of persons of rank. From these circumstances he was known among the people of Versailles by the nickname of *Le Marquis de Rencontre*. He was handsome and intelligent, but he had a good deal of the arrogance of people of low birth raised by no merit of their own to a high station in society; and this was increased, as it ever is, by the rankling feeling of the contempt attached to him by his high born associates: which forced him to an insolence of demeanor, as the only chance of preserving his artificial level. He had also a dash of the libertine about him—an unsteadiness of principle and opinion—which evidently showed that he had no moral feeling strong enough to keep him in the right course. Cornelius soon perceived all these points in his character, and he was, perhaps, the last associate our hero would have chosen, had it not been from that involuntary attraction which led him towards every thing that harmonized with his devotion, which was rapidly becoming idolatory. He calculated on Armand's attachment to the queen, and on the chances which might arise from an intimacy with him for his seeing her in less formal circumstances than his public duty permitted. In these views Cornelius was quite successful, for he not only procured, by means of his new acquaintances, facilities for private entrance into the palace and gardens of the Trianons, but he had continued occasions of hearing of the queen, in all her domestic pursuits; and he even gained so far on the good-will of Armand, as to get from him a small portion of a lock of her hair taken from some fixed in the setting behind a miniature, which his royal patroness had presented to him on one of her fête days, as the most affectionate token of regard.

Provided with this treasure, Cornelius felt himself possessed of an amulet, not against the evil chances of fate, but against what they too commonly arise from, the evil conduct of men. With the lock of her hair on his heart, and her image ever in his mind, he was satisfied that he could not possibly commit an unworthy action; for he felt like all those who imagine the presence of a revered object, as if there was something approaching the holiness of religious fervor in these sentiments, which in raising him to this perpetually fancied communion, seemed to lift him high above the grosser failings of humanity. One evening in the month of June, as he walked with Armand in the neighborhood of the Trianons, the oppressive heat of the weather forced them to take shelter in one of those little pleasure gardens, some of which are to be found even now on the outskirts of the park. At that period, when the population of Versailles was five times its present amount, and the constant presence of a large military force added gaiety to the neighborhood, those little *guinguettes* were the scenes of continual revelry, dancing and enjoyment. On the evening in question, the one in which Armand and Cornelius sheltered themselves was crowded to excess, every arbor was occupied by some party, sipping their lemonade, or orgeat and water; while the dancing ground was occupied by a group who tripped it rather gracefully than gaily, to the sound of a good orchestra elevated among the branches of some acacias, whose white blossoms

soms came down with every breeze in showers of fragrance on the floor.

The companions looked in vain for a seat, and were obliged to content themselves by standing under the shade, and observing the light movements of the dancers, who seemed insensible to the heat which had so much incommoded them. While they gazed, and exchanged their passing observations, they remarked that they were in their turn observed. A group, consisting of three or four officers of a regiment of chasseurs, then quartered at the cavalry barracks at Sevres, and as many more of the National Guard of Versailles, sat drinking in one of the arbors. Their conversation was boisterous, and every word bore directly or indirectly a political meaning. They talked loudly of the discussions at this time beginning to manifest themselves in the States General, and of the contests inevitably about to arise between the people and the throne. They next spoke of the king in terms of insolent allusion—and from that topic they came to the queen. Cornelius and Armand had hitherto listened with comparative indifference, but now they felt their attention aroused. It was quite evident that the conversation was directed at them. Armand's person was well known, and the uniform of Cornelius made him at once conspicuous, but he too was more particularly recognised as the *Garde-du Corps*, respecting whom such calumnies were afloat. Snatches of popular songs were sung by the party, bearing upon the minions of the court and its servile hirelings. Loose hints were flung at random, and coarse jests went round, all pointed at our hero and his companion. The dance ceased, and all this became evident to the company. Many seemed to participate in the sentiments of the insulting bravoës, and the rest of the party were either indifferent or unobserving as to what was passing.

From the moment that these proceedings took a personal turn, but still more when they seemed connected with the queen, Cornelius felt rooted to the spot by the intense desire of marking some word or phrase on which he could decidedly fix; but the feeling of profound respect always mingled with his thoughts of her, made him shrink from any violence which might compromise her name. He therefore waited with all the outward calmness which his boiling indignation allowed him to assume; and he also considered it a point of duty to leave the first notice of what passed to Armand, in right of his more prominent situation in society, and more particularly from the relation in which he stood towards the queen. But Armand, to his great amaze, showed no desire to interfere. He seemed, on the contrary, as if he wished to assume a want of consciousness of any thing offensive, and after some casual remarks in an embarrassed air, he proposed to Cornelius that they should retire from the place.

"What!" cried the latter, "would you go, and leave these bullying ruffians to assert that we fled from their insults?"

"Come away, my dear friend," replied the other; "recollect how delicately I am placed. Were I to step forward as the champion of the queen, I should have a dozen duels on my hands—for heaven's sake come."

"Is it thus you argue, Armand?" said Cornelius. "You astonish

me ! can such considerations make you submit to indignities offered to her name ?”

“Why no, not exactly,” said his companion in a half whisper, and at the same time leading Cornelius by the arm ; “but you know a brawl on her account might do her more injury than service at this crisis—so do, my friend come quietly away.

Cornelius yielded slowly to the movement which led him along, but was just framing a reply to prove the disgrace of a retreat, when one of the hostile party shouted loudly—

“I told you so, my comrades. There they go, sneaking away, beaten from the field without a blow !—worthy the minions of the modern Messalina ! Victory, victory.”

“By heavens, this is too bad !” exclaimed Cornelius, disengaging his arm from the grasp of Armand.

“Come on, come on,” cried the latter, “we shall be murdered else !”

“Let us die then,” replied our hero, “sooner than brook these atrocious insults !” and with these words, he burst from the renewed hold of his companion, and stalked up to the table at which the braves sat.

“Which of this company,” demanded he sternly, “dared to utter those calumnious epithets ?”

“All, all,” cried they with one voice, and rising from their seats. —“We all uttered them.”

“And all repeat them,” said one of the national guard.

“Then you are all liars and traitors,” exclaimed Cornelius, “and I stand here to make good my words.”

He instantly drew his sword, and stepped back a pace, to put himself in a posture of defence. They quickly followed his movement, and half a dozen sabres glittered at once before him. The whole party rushed forward, and in the unpremeditated lury of the moment, they would have cut their opponent in pieces, had not one of the chasseurs, a huge fellow of fierce aspect, with immense mustachios curling below his chin, thrown himself between our hero and his assailants.

“Stand back, stand back, comrades !” cried he in an authoritative voice,—“would you fall on a single man ? For shame—for shame ! no, he must choose amongst us. Give him fair play, and let him meet his death honorably to us all !”

“Down with him !” cried some ; “let him choose then,” said others ;—“which of us will you take ?” “Give me the pleasure of cutting your throat !” “It was I that uttered the words, make haste, minion !” and such phrases were uttered all at once by the party.

“Since I must choose amongst you then,” said our hero, “I shall take him with the long mustachios. He seems less a ruffian than the rest.”

“Cut him in pieces !” vociferated the others, and they rushed closer towards him, when the chasseur once more threw himself between them, and cried out, “Hold every one ! he has chosen me, and sealed his own fate. He shall die by my hand. Let no one dare to touch him ; he belongs to me alone !”

"Come on then, come on!" exclaimed Cornelius. "Not so, my friend," replied the chasseur, calmly. "It must not be said you had foul play, you are alone here."

"Alone!" cried Cornelius, looking round, and for the first time observing that he was abandoned by Armand; "no matter, come on!"

"No, Sir," said the chasseur, "not now certainly. But in two hours hence the moon will be up. We shall have better light than now, and less company. Go look for a friend, but beware of the *Marquis*. I shall expect you yonder,—there, under the walls of the *Menagerie*. You have no time to lose," he added, "and here is my card, that you may know whom to ask for if the moon be overcast."

"I shall be punctual," said Cornelius, "and am glad to have to deal with a man of honour." And pulling out one of his own cards in exchange for that which he took, he walked away, sheathing his sword, and followed by glances of respect and admiration from the crowd.

As he moved briskly on towards the town, by the shortest path leading through the park, his mind was in a state of high effervescence. A confusion of thoughts arose, but uppermost was the wish for vengeance on the slanderers of the queen.

"Yes, she shall be revenged, by heavens!" cried he to himself, clenching his fist and raising it towards heaven. Just as he uttered the spontaneous exclamation, something rustled in the grove beside him, and as he clapped his hand to his sword, Armand jumped out on the path.

"Good God, is it you, then!" cried he; "you are safe, my friend!"

"And you too," replied Cornelius contemptuously.

"Don't think ill of me for apparent abandonment of you," said Armand: "I had most particular reasons."

"It appears so," answered our hero, moving quickly on.

"Why do you go so fast!" asked the other, "has any thing happened? are you hurt?"

"No."

"Where are you going then?"

"Home."

"No where else?"

"No."

"Shall I accompany you, my friend?"

"No, no."

"Good-night then—good-night! this is my path. Take care of yourself!"

"I need not return the advice, Armand," replied Cornelius with a sarcastic smile, that curved his lip like a rippling wave on the face of the ocean, which silently speaks agitation beneath.

On arriving at the barracks he found Bryan waiting for him at the entrance with a letter in his hand, which he snatched hastily, supposing it, in his uncalculating fixedness of thought on the one great purpose of his mind, to be in some measure connected with his approaching meeting. He tore it open, and started back with conflicting emotions, when he read it to be an invitation for that even-

ing to a party given by the Duchess de Polignac, at which it was well known to him the queen had promised to appear. His heart throbbed quickly, and seemed almost to rise in his throat. He felt for an instant rooted to the spot. He had longed for this invitation, which had been promised him, and procured for him by his colonel, with a boundless impatience. It was the first time he had obtained the actual honor of being admitted into the private society of the queen. It was known that nobody was invited to parties where she went without the name being submitted to her, and he had here the proof that she had sanctioned and approved of his approaching her presence for the first time, at the very moment that he could not, dare not avail himself of the opportunity. For an instant he resolved to go—to catch one glimpse of her at all hazards—to hear her voice once more—be presented to her, and then fly to justify her name, or perish in the proud distinction of being known to her on a footing of honorable acquaintance.

But his delicate sense of propriety forced him to abandon this intention as soon as it was performed; for he thought it would have an air of gasconade, thus to throw himself into her presence, on the point of an affair which the next morning must make public, be its results what they might. He therefore stepped quickly to his room, desiring Bryan to go and seek Father O'Collogan on the instant.

"Faith, and you'll find his reverence first yourself, Master Cornelius—as it's my place to walk up stairs after your honor," said Bryan.

"Why where is he?"

"Where would he be but in your honor's room, waiting for you, wid a letter from the ould master?"

"Good God! from my father!" exclaimed Cornelius; "I had never thought of him! how is my nature changed, to forget him at such a moment! what sufferings may not be this hour preparing for him should I fall in this meeting!—But no matter, it must be."

Father O'Collogan sat waiting for his young friend anxiously wishing for his coming, that he might hear the contents of the letter. When Cornelius entered, the priest put it before him on the table, with a significant look of anxiety and pleasure.

"Not now, my good Sir," said Cornelius with emotion, "not to-night, I cannot venture to read it now."

"Why what's the matter with you, child?" said the priest, in surprise: "why it's from your Father, agra?"

"Even so, Sir—I cannot indeed till the morning—or perhaps late to-night, but not now, I am going out on most urgent business."

"Business, arrah then what business, may I be bould to ask, honey?"

"Why the fact is, Sir, that it is somewhat which concerns her Majesty—so you see that I cannot."—

"Bee that you can't! oh, by the powers I see it clear enough that you can though, do whatever you please. I knew well there was something in the wind when I saw the Duchess's servant coming with that billet with the big seal on it; why then long life and sue-

cess to you my darling, I say; then the queen has sent for you at last! I knew what it would come to—your fortune's made!"

Cornelius, shocked at the mischief he had done by thus committing the name of the queen to the incautious keeping of the priest's imagination, saw that he had but one course to pursue in order to save all risks of mis-statement. That was to tell him the exact truth of his situation: he did so therefore briefly, explaining in as few words as possible the cause and circumstances of the quarrel.

"So you see, my dear good Sir," said Cornelius, finishing his recital; "you see it will be quite useless to interfere or dissuade me—honor and duty command it—I must fight this man."

"Why then, thunder and 'ounds, to be sure you must!" exclaimed the priest; "who the devil thought of dissuading you to the contrary! is it me? far be it from me to stand before a christian soldier and his duty!—my darling boy, I was'n't twenty long years chaplain in the Irish brigade for nothing. By my sowl an you must fight him sure enough, and kill him too, plase the Lord;—and what's his name, my honey?"

"That I never enquired, Sir, but here's his card."

The priest took it, and holding it up to the fading light close to the widdow, read it twice or thrice over, and then exclaimed in a voice approaching to terror—

"By the powers it's too true—it's the Black Captain himself!—Captain Alexandre Le Noir of the Chasseurs! I would not wish to frighten you my darling boy, but in troth I fear you hav'n't long to live!"

"Why so, Sir?" said Cornelius, smiling; "do you know this formidable fellow?"

"Faith I do, to my cost, aghra; for he took the life of two of my best friends in the brigade, besides breaking Captain O'Mahoney's thigh with a pistol bullet, and running Sub-Lieutenant Woolohan through the lungs under the ramparts of Strasbourg."

"Then, my good father, I take their cause as well as my own on this sword," said Cornelius, as he buckled on his belt, and gave directions to Bryan to take his pistols out of the clothes-press where they were deposited in their case.

"Oh the devil's the fear of you, if courage could do it, I know very well," said the Priest; "but he's a terrible fellow that Black Captain, as we used to call him in the Brigade. He always snuffs his candle with a bullet, and he calls the waiter at his hotel by the report of a pistol."

"Well, Sir," said Cornelius, "if I fall by his arm, it is in a good cause at all events."

"Aye," replied the priest, "and it won't be for want of masses any how, if your sowl stays long in purgatory—lave that to me, my darling."

"Now God bless you, my dear Sir!" added Cornelius solemnly, after he had completed his arrangements, and dispatched Bryan with a note to one of his comrades, requiring his immediate attendance to accompany him to the place of meeting. "God bless you, Sir, and if we part for the last time, I trust to your friendship to break this

matter to my father—to tell him I thought of him at the last—and to explain that if I did not read his letter—it was only that I feared—”

“Why then what’s the use of bothering me with all this now?” said the priest. “Hav’nt you time enough to open your mind while we’re going to the ground?”

“To the ground, Sir! why you don’t mean to come with me, surely?”

“Don’t I indeed! you’ve a very odd notion of my character, honey, if you think I’d let a friend be in the way of going out of the world, and not see him safe, and give him a blessing at the end of his journey. No, no, that’s not the way in the brigade, let me tell you. Come along, come along, my jewel.”

Cornelius’s friend was quickly with him; and the party, entering the Park through the *Orangerie*, arrived soon under the palace walls, and they saw by the lights streaming from the windows of the apartments occupied by the Duchess de Polignac, a group of ladies standing in the recess of a window, looking out, and apparently admiring the varied effects produced by the expiring daylight, and the young moon-beams sporting through the branches of the copsewood which skirted the lake called *La piece Suisse*. Cornelius looking up, suddenly distinguished, or fancied, or hoped that he saw the Queen. A pang shot through his heart, he felt it sinking, and putting his hand upon his breast the locket of hair met his touch. He stopped for a moment, and unperceived by his companions drew it forth, imprinted on it an impassioned kiss, threw his eyes a moment towards the window, and felt his bosom glow with zeal and courage as he marched forward.

Under the wall of the Menagerie, which stands outside the park and close to the road leading to St. Cyr, they saw the figures of three men, who stood in consultation as Cornelius and his friends advanced. The tall form of the Black Captain was not to be mistaken. The parties soon took their ground, and their pistols were put into their hands. No one perhaps ever fought a premeditated duel without becoming pale as he stood before his opponent. It is a nervous moment for most men, an awful one for all. Neither Cornelius nor his enemy were exceptions to this rule, but the rush of blood to their hearts was no proof of fear. They stood sternly looking at each other for a moment, and Father O’Collogan declared that they might have been mistaken for a couple of the statues in the park, while the cold moon-beam streamed across their pale profiles and motionless forms.

“The Lord steady your arm, my boy!” exclaimed the priest in a fervent but faltering tone, as he walked out of the line of fire; with the seconds and Bryan, whose teeth chattered together as he attempted to mutter an “Amen!”

“Where will you hit him, *Le Noir*?” asked the Black Captain’s second, as he moved aside.

“In the head,” replied he.

“Oh the murdering thief!” exclaimed the priest, wringing his hands. “The black villain” cried Bryan.

The signal given, both pistols went off at the same instant. The

Captain remained steady on his legs. Cornelius tottered a step or two, and his hat fell.

"He's a dead man, heaven receive his soul!" cried the priest.—He rushed forward with Bryan and the seconds, as Cornelius stooped down to the earth, and when they reached him he had picked up his hat, and replaced it on his head.

"The shadow of your cockade saved you, Sir," said the Black Captain coolly; and it might have been so, for the ball passed just above it through the hat, grazing Cornelius's hair.

"Draw your sword, Sir, and defend yourself!" continued the determined duellist; and before either Father O'Colloghan or Bryan had time for an exclamation, the combatants' weapons were crossed and clashing.

"Stop, stop!" cried the Black Captain's second, "my friend is bleeding."

"'Tis nothing," said Le Noir fiercely, and shaking his left hand to motion off his friend, a stream of blood issued from it, for, as it had hung loosely by his side, Cornelius's ball had shattered two of the fingers.

"If you are much hurt, Sir," said Cornelius, dropping his sword's point,—but before he could finish the sentence his antagonist called out.

"Come on, come on, Sir, no babbling!"

Cornelius raised his arm once more. He knew that his life depended on his instant exertion, and that he had no chance of escape in a scientific contest. He therefore sprang forward with one bound; and receiving the point of his opponent's sword slightly in his left arm, he made a thrust, and felt the hilt of his own weapon strike hard against the buttons of the coat, as the blade went through the heart and body of his foe. As he attempted to pull it out, the huge carcass fell against him, and as it dropped heavily to the ground, a convulsive heave of the chest, and a deep groan, left it a breathless corpse.

The friends of the unfortunate victim were astounded. They could not for awhile believe the result that was before their eyes; nor imagine the possibility of his skilful arm having been baffled by an untried boy. Cornelius lingered horror-struck on the spot, and gazed upon the livid countenance with great agitation.

Father O'Colloghan in vain tried to awaken a spark of life by his pious ejaculations. Bryan trembled so violently as to require the help of his master's second to lead him from the ground; and the whole party reached the barracks in bewildering doubts of the reality of the awful scene.

CHAPTER VII.

The reputation of this affair with the Black Captain became a moral passport for our hero's admission into all the best society of Versailles. When Cornelius wiped his enemy's blood from his sword he seemed at the same time to relieve his heart from the load which, in the first moments after their contest, had laid there so heavily. He had a clear conscience, his nerves were strong; and he had all his life learned lessons of fortitude and the praise of military feeling. He had been accustomed to tales of warfare by his father, and seen a duel or two in his boyhood, and had frequently witnessed the bloody contest of rival factions at the fairs and patterns in his native country. Above all, he gloried in the cause in which he had risked his own life, and in which he had taken that of another; and if at times some feeling of regret did arise at his having shed the blood of a fellow creature, he reflected that it was but perhaps the opening act of a deep drama; for the stormy aspect of things told him he might frequently require a bold heart and a sharp sword. Distinctions of all kinds flowed in upon him. The peaceful members of society felt grateful to him for having ridden the world of a pest, and even the quarrelsome were rejoiced at the disposal of the bravo who occupied the first station on the fighting list. Cornelius' immediate comrades in the guard felt his exploit as their own, and were proud of the doper, as partaking in some way of his celebrity. He was presented to many persons of rank, was assured of immediate promotion, and seemed fairly to have made his first step towards a prosperous career. Father O'Collogan was greatly elated by the glory of his young friend; and Bryan Mulcahie held his shoulders full as high as he carried his head before, while that seemed in his estimation of its loftiness to touch the very stars. In proportion as our hero was raised, Armand, as he merited, sank in the world's esteem. Deeply humiliated, he almost entirely disappeared from Versailles, and was frequently seen lounging among the popular meetings of Paris, with a gloomy and discontented air.

Cornelius took all his honors with modesty and moderation; but now fairly omitted as one in the most intimate circle of the queen's friends, and occupying the station which he felt his own, in virtue of his zeal if not of his services, he had reached the summit of his desires. To see her, to gaze, as he frequently did, for hours together, on her beauty, to hear her, to listen to her animated conversation freely poured out before him—sometimes even to be addressed by her and to be permitted to reply—what more could he desire! The rest at least depended on himself;—to think of her by day, to dream of her by night, to wear her lock of hair upon his heart, and to vow his whole life to her service. The particular state of our hero's feelings at this period was developed in some fragments of prose and verse, the former too unconnected, and the latter too imperfect for publication. The prose was merely the rambling utterance of conflict-

ing feelings; the poetry, passionate addresses to his idol, but written in moods of too much sincerity and real emotion, to allow of the artificial graces of composition. The documents served, however, as records from which to draw many conclusions, that the more scanty detail of facts would scarcely have warranted.

The disunion among the States General every day presented the most formidable aspect. The National Assembly commenced its self-created career; the power of the king was defied, and he himself set at naught. The Bastile was taken. Tyranny was chased from the land, having previously been rendered so vapory and impalpable, that like the body of a magician, it left no shadow on its path. But the fifteenth of July, the day after the fall of the Bastile, when the power of the crown was virtually crushed beneath its ruins, the king appeared in the midst of the National Assembly, addressed them in the sincerity of his moderation, was heard with applause, conducted by his people to his palace, and once more possessed the semblance of his state. He deceived himself then, as he did at every step of his gradual disgrace, into the belief that his good faith would beget sincerity in the assembly, and that having acknowledged their rights, all might yet go well. The queen felt differently, and her daring and insulted spirit frowned at the storm whose violence it could not quell. On the day following this memorable visit of humiliation, Marie Antoinette implored the king, as the only hope against the evils which pressed down their authority, to instantly convoke the Notables of Paris, and give them the powers which the Assembly had wrenched from the States General and made his own. But Louis rejected her proposal. Instead of taking that bold step, he repaired to Paris the next morning, and by displaying himself, humiliated as he was, to the people, he set the seal upon their sovereignty, and his own subjection.

From this period no chance of good existed for the queen, and she appears to have almost abandoned all hope of averting the fate she saw preparing. Her arguments to arouse the king to a sense of his danger or his dignity, fell blunted against the silken sloth by which his spirit was encompassed. Without a hold upon the nation, or a party in the state, she had but one duty to perform—to follow the fortunes of her husband, and to soften by her sympathy the fall which her firmness could not prevent. During the remaining months of this eventful summer she passed much of her time at the Little Trianon, that favorite retreat, where the elegance of her taste had such ample field for development, in transforming the mathematical insipidity of French gardening into the romantic varieties of an English park. If any doubt could exist as to the unfitness of Marie Antoinette for an intimate connection with the nation she ruled over, the Little Trianon is still the evidence of it. The heart must be a hard one, of him who can roam through this enchanting desert at the present day, pace the curved walks, linger on the borders of the lakes, muse on the rustic bridges, or stroll through the lovely village, without feeling a throb of anguish as the mind turns to her who created and adorned the spot. And in recalling her innocent enjoyment of this place, and marvelling that it should stand isolated and unoccupied in the country,

we can fancy an analogy in its neglect and her persecution. Both the queen and her pleasure grounds were in a taste too accordant with nature to suit a people so artificial. The remark of La Bruyere, that the French wish their masters to be serious and severe, may be fairly illustrated by the taste of their gardens; and their feeling for their king is like that for their flower pots—that they may be raised up or trampled down at pleasure.

Cornelius had full liberty to enter the Trianons, even when the queen and her party were there. Of this he had never availed himself; for great as was his desire to throw himself continually into her presence, his sense of propriety was too acute to admit of an intrusion on her private pleasures. One evening, however, he returned home early from Paris, where, as was his constant custom, he had been passing the day, less from curiosity to gaze on buildings and promenades, which had but little attractions for him then, than from his desire to watch the progress of the public spirit, and by learning accurately the state of feeling against the queen, to be perhaps enabled, in ever so trifling a degree, to counteract its effects. He was fatigued and agitated; for in the simple habit of a citizen he had mingled with the throng in the Palais Royal, and listened to the abusive tirade of a vulgar demagogue against her whom he believed to be the very essence of all that was pure and good. The absolute necessity of restraining his indignation threw all its violence inwards; and when he reached Versailles, his suppressed rage seemed to call for some soothing remedy. His steps naturally turned towards the Trianon, then occupied by the king, the queen, and a few chosen friends, from among those of the courtiers whom they esteemed the most.

As he was known to the porters at the gate and possessed the countersign for admittance, he had no difficulty in entering the grounds, but that which arose from his own timidity. He paused as he put his foot within the precincts which he was wont to consider sacred; and he asked himself if it was delicate or just to use his privilege for violating the privacy before him. His doubts were, however, put to flight by a distant view of a female group within, and he could not resist the desire of observing the pursuits of this rural party, and judging between the fact of the recreations of the Trianon, and the calumnious accounts which were received by the public. He passed therefore to the left, and wound through the path that leads behind the circular pavilion appropriated to the queen's music parties. As he moved on he heard the tones of a harpsichord accompanying a female voice; but it was not that of her whose tones or whose presence could alone have power to soothe him then. He walked forward, and looking to the right down through the willows and drooping acacias whose branches floated on the lake, he saw a boat rowed by two men in peasants' dresses, but whom he soon recognized to be the Count d'Artois, the king's brother, and the Duke de Luxembourg. Three ladies sat in the boat, and amused themselves by throwing crumbs of bread to the swans, who pursued them at full sail, with curved necks and anxious beaks, raising a froth round their feathered prows, as they cut through the rippling track formed by the boat before them. The disguise of their rustic costume could not deceive Cornelius as to the

forms of the ladies, and he knew one to be the queen, the other her favorite friend the Duchess de Polignac, and the third the Princess Elizabeth. As he followed with his eye the course of the boat, he marked a party standing on the opposite bank of the lake ready to receive it. He took his station at the foot of the little round tower called *La Tour de Malbreuck*, as the boat was moored close to the steps of the Miller's Cottage, and he saw the queen handed on shore by the king, in the dress of the *Bailly* of the village, which part he filled in that day's rural pageant; and the whole party moved along towards the house appropriated for the residence of the rustic magistrate. The various cottages were occupied by their noble tenants, who put on for the occasion the habiliments suited to their harmless masquerade. One was the simple *cure*, another the miller, a third a farmer, and so on; and every one assumed, for the time, as much of the manners of the characters they personated, as was consistent with the talents of the several actors.

As Cornelius gazed on this extraordinary scene, and saw the semblance of contentment which reigned around him, he could not help moralizing for awhile. He mused on this mockery of happiness, and would have fathomed, if he could, the depths of pride, profligacy and ambition, which he believed to be hidden under so many humble habits. He thought he could discern the courtier's treachery but ill concealed by the homely air which sat uneasily upon him; and in the gait and gestures of the village dancers, he fancied he could trace a mixture of vanity and falsehood. But when, as he followed the movements of the different parties, he came once more in view of that which surrounded the king and queen, and saw her looking on with the composed expression of real pleasure, and with an air of calm enjoyment, at the occupation of an attendant who was milking the *Bailly's* cows, Cornelius thought that he had at last found a pair, one of whom was formed permanently to fill the character he personated for a day, and the other to enjoy the real delights of a life, the temporary representation of which was planned from her heartfelt taste for its reality. "*There are no faces,*" exclaimed he half aloud, "to tell the hypocrisy of the heart; but a sincerity that sanctifies the whole. Heavens! what a pity that yonder king cannot sink at once into the obscure enjoyments of the lowly class he represents this moment, and that she, so fitted to adorn and elevate the humble pleasures of life, must be doomed to an existence of burnished state, that bows down her happiness, as the brilliant sun-beam withers the flower it shines on!"

The impression left on our hero, by the scene which he witnessed, was of a nature too melancholy to be really soothing. He quitted the place by an outlet different from the way he had entered; and he thus saw for the first and last time the idol mistress of his heart and soul, in the character which suited her best. This was the latest of those pleasure parties in which Marie Antoinette was permitted to shake off, even in seeming, the formal cares of royalty. Many of those who formed her society on these occasions were soon after dispersed abroad; among them, the Count D'Artois and the Duchess de Polignac: and he who wanders now in the well kept, but dreary, gardens of the Tri-

anon, marking the tenantless cottages, the lonely groves, and empty temples, may let his fancy shadow forth the graceful form of the queen, surrounded by an imagined group of joyous friends,—and thus people the scene, which would look less desolate than now, if the wild weeds and tangled shrubs were suffered to shut out the memory of its former aspect.

As Cornelius walked slowly along, outside the deep ditch which fences the garden towards the west, he heard from within occasional bursts of laughter, as if the thoughtless courtiers had no heed for the dangers which seemed hovering over the land. Two voices in deep conversation in the walk which runs close to the edge of the ditch, formed a contrast to these unmeaning sounds. Cornelius was no listener, but having caught the first words, the voice which uttered them contained a spell which attracted him towards it in his own despite.

It was the queen who spoke; and there was in her tone a deep seriousness, as if her heart was in the words she uttered.

"Alas!" said she, "what can I do to please them? is not my life devoted to my husband, to my children, and to them; but—no, they will not allow me to be their friend."

"They are growing quite infuriated against you—these pleasure parties are marked with particular obloquy," replied the voice of a man, whom Cornelius could not recognize.

"And would you have me abandon these only resources now left me?" said the queen in an affecting tone.

"You must," answered the voice.

"I will not," exclaimed she, with an expression of pride, and something of resentment. "No, I will not, at the command of an ignorant and ungrateful rabble, be driven from the only consolation left me for their baseness. I tell you in the words of Madame de Maintenon, I am on the stage, and must submit to be hissed or applauded."

"Recollect," said the voice, "that our great ancestor, Louis XIV, danced on his own theatre but gave up the pleasure when a poet wrote verses to prove its impropriety."

"You are always apt in reply," said the queen, "and I should be deeply influenced by your advice on all matters, were you not so tinged with the odious principles that are abroad, so fatal to the country, to the king, and to us all."

"A great revolution is at hand—the king should become its chief," replied the voice with firmness; and our hero, recollecting that these words were a few months before uttered by the king's second brother, the Count de Provence,* had no hesitation in believing that he was the Mentor of his sister-in-law at this moment. He looked through the spaces in the shrubbery, where the figures passed, but he could only distinguish glimpses of the rustic robes worn by the queen, and the cassock of him who personated the cure. A few words more, pronounced in an under tone, were inaudible to him, but just as the speakers turned into another walk, he heard Marie Antoinette say, with great emotion,

* Afterwards Louis XVIII.

"Well, since it must be so, I give up the most innocent enjoyment of my life, in obedience to the cruel voice of the people; but it will be of no use. Every concession will but hasten the crisis!" and here the conversation died away.

Cornelius reflected on the speech he had that day heard from the ruffian orator of the Palais Royal, and on the applauding shout of the listeners. He repeated the last prophetic words of the queen, and unconsciously exclaimed aloud—

"Then let us be prepared!"

"Prepared!" echoed some one close behind him; "prepared for what, my friend?"

Our hero turned shortly round. He was unarmed, but fearless. He recognized the speaker, and distinguished his voice at the same moment. It was Armand who stood close by him, wrapped in a cloak.

"Prepared for what, Cornelius?" reiterated he.

"For the courage of our enemies, and the cowardice of our friends," returned Cornelius, with a determined and reproachful air.

"Come, come," cried Armand, "forgive me that affair my good fellow. I bear you no malice, believe me, although your conduct has blasted my reputation perhaps forever. You must forgive my conduct."

"Forgive it!"

"Aye, and forget it. Men must submit to circumstances; and I am no more than other men. Consider how I am situated—how much hatred I excite from the mere chances of my fortune—matters quite out of my control. I am surrounded by dangers, and must meet them by temporizing with events. Adopted by the queen, I adore her. Doubt me not, Cornelius—at this moment you see me lingering round the spot she inhabits, in hopes of catching the sound of her voice, for I dare not look upon her face: but what can I do? my very attachment to her is a crime in the eyes of the people."

"The rabble, you mean," interrupted our hero; "the rabble, who, though they may possess the seeds, cannot from the very nature of their pursuits, have time for the cultivation of refined sentiments, or comprehend the gratitude you owe the queen. Is that the ordeal you would be judged by?"

"They are all-powerful—or will be so soon, my friend."

"Brute ignorance can have no power that I will own," said Cornelius.

"I must though," answered Armand, "remember I myself am of the people, and must feel their cause my own."

"What," cried Cornelius, "is this then your creed? I know what these words would say. The cause of the people!—abused and misapplied phrase! But your views are changed—it seems. The people!—do you then abandon your royal patroness, to whom you owe every thing? Do you give up all your high aspirations, and resolve to sink yourself into the mob?"

"No, I adore *her*—I repeat it; but I confess I do feel a stir in my plebeian blood, when I hear the people calling for their rights. In fact I have made my choice. I will not stand in the ranks to which my brother may be opposed. I am a citizen, and will act as becomes my station."

This trade made just its proper impression on Cornelius, by showing him that this quondam friend, who lately held his nose so high, as if he would not smell the very name of the people, had now changed sides, because the people's heads were towering above his own. Cornelius continued the conversation till a late hour that night, and he found that the *ci-devant* Marquis de Rancontre was, indeed, reduced to the rank of a simple citizen, by the operation of personal fear, a powerful instrument in such times for making converts to any cause which seems to flourish. Armand was evidently deep in the secrets of the Parisian proceedings. His long absences were now accounted for. He talked freely with our hero, whom he evidently esteemed and confided in—but not enough to commit himself. He spoke only as a patriot, not as a conspirator: but, amidst all his reasonings, he protested an affection and attachment to the queen, which seemed to break out every moment unpremeditatedly, like a beam of light on the gloomy tenor of his discourse. Cornelius was determined not to lose sight of him; for he saw how valuable he might prove as a means of counteracting the machinations of which the queen was intended to be the first victim. They parted therefore with a promise on the part of Armand to see Cornelius often, and to keep him informed of the state of the public mind towards the queen, as far as his opportunities might allow of his understanding its movements.

CHAPTER VIII.

For two months more, the elements of the revolutionary tempest were preparing themselves in the depths of the Parisian mind and bubbling fiercely up to the surface of society. The Assembly, which was supposed to represent the Nation, was merely a mirror which reflected the semblance of public feeling. It repeated the frantic gestures, and showed the distorted features of the people; but it gave no insight into the tumultuous passions which throbbed in the pulses of their hearts. In fact, the nation was not represented—and its Assembly was a mockery; for it stood forth itself in all the power of individual existence, and it outvoiced the clamorings of those who called themselves its organs. The people proclaimed themselves omnipotent; and rightly. It is not the assertion of their sovereignty, but its abuse, which makes them hideous in the eyes of thinking men.

Versailles, during the time immediately preceding the catastrophe which shattered its prosperity, was a scene of continual agitation and alarm. Many of the cold and calculating nobles had begun to withdraw from the field of the forthcoming contest, and left it to the occupation of those rash and headstrong men, whose desertion might have given some chance for safety to the country. Private councils, which

could effect nothing to restrain the march of events,—and public cabals, by which it was hastened—ill conceived plans for prevention of ill, and impracticable projects for its cure—such were the combinations of confusion and incapacity, which stood opposed to the rushing torrent of the revolution.

The Garde-du-Corps was at this period almost the only sure reliance on which the safety of the royal family rested. The whole body of the troops was more or less infected with the spirit of revolt ; and it was only those who came in intimate contact with the residence of the court, in whom the least trust could be reposed. The Regiment of Flanders was then stationed at Versailles ; and for the purpose of keeping up its good disposition towards the king, and to draw it more closely to his cause, the Garde-du-Corps invited the officers to a repast, for which very splendid preparations were made.

The Garde-du-Corps at this epoch consisted of eight hundred horsemen, a powerful body in common times, but very unimportant then. This force was chiefly composed of young men of the first connections, and their attachment to the king was proportioned to the favor and consequence which they enjoyed. The suppression, in 1775, of *La Maison Militaire*, the military household of the king, threw a considerable share of distinction upon the *Garde*, who thus possessed the exclusive privilege of protecting the royal person. But the chief hold on their allegiance, and the best security for its continuance, existed perhaps in the character of their beautiful queen, and the powerful incitements which her service held forth for the chivalrous fidelity of these brave and ardent youths. Her marked distinction of this corps was very early displayed, for during the rejoicings at the birth of the dauphin both she and the king accepted their invitation to a splendid ball, which Marie Antoinette herself condescended to open, by a minuet danced with a simple guardsman, a youth of gay and gallant bearing then, and who may be seen to-day occasionally strolling on the Boulevards—happy in his old age, and in the recollection of that proudest moment of his life.

The repast to the Regiment of Flanders was given on the 1st of September, 1789, and was the chief cause which hurried on the remaining political deeds of that eventful year. The large theatre in the palace was the place selected for the entertainment, and the preparations showed that it was no common purpose which was meant by that memorable feast. The tables were laid all down the stage, and across the pit, which was level with it, and the benches of which were removed for the occasion. A numerous orchestra was placed in the gallery, and the boxes were filled with the ladies of the court and their friends, all full dressed. The whole extent of the stage was disencumbered of its machinery, and the large looking glasses, placed in every interval of the side scenes, reflected back the company, the lights, and the decorations. The guests, consisting of the officers of the regiment of Flanders and a part of the national guard of Versailles, were distributed amongst their inviters ; and the unanimity of sentiment which prevailed was in harmony with the magnificence of the whole scene. As the feast went on, and the glasses sparkled, the spirits of the hosts mounted with their wine, and the guests caught the flame of that enthusiasm, the train of

which was laid so skilfully. The English custom of giving toasts, just then gaining ground in France, was on this occasion successfully adapted to the rising loyalty of the meeting ; and when the King's health was given, the band struck up the celebrated loyal and National air *O Richard ! O mon Roi !* This was the signal, or at least the impulse, for the grand movement of the evening ; for amidst the echoing shouts of "Live the King and Queen !" a deputation of the Garde-du-Corps was despatched to the Royal apartments, with an humble request that their Majesties would honor the meeting by their presence, and witness the unanimous expressions of loyalty and zeal. It is difficult to say, although many exist to whom the fact must be known, whether or not this was a preconcerted manœuvre, or whether the king was aware of it and prepared to act accordingly. Much has been written on the occasion, for and against this supposition ; but every probability of the case seems to imply that the queen at all events participated in the design. It was consistent with the undaunted firmness of her character, and was a brave and spirit-stirring effort to uphold her sinking cause.

When the king, the queen, and the dauphin entered the theatre, by the front door leading under the centre boxes, and opening full upon the assembled company, the effect was electrical ; the wildest expression of enthusiasm burst from all sides ; the band repeated the inspiring air : the feasters rose, and glass in hand, shouted it in tones of startling fervor ; the ladies in the boxes waved their handkerchiefs, and joined their timid voices to the hoarse sounds below ; and the whole formed a chorus of discord more grateful than the most melodious harmony. Amongst the most enraptured but the least boisterous was our hero. The deep emotions of his soul could not in her presence find vent, for his respect restrained the outward symbols of delight. He was, however, one of these who followed closest on the royal train, as it returned to the apartments of the king ; and when he came back to this scene of festivity he gave loose to his joy. The party at length broke up, and scattering into the court-yards and the parks, their enthusiasm was soon caught by those without, as well as felt by all within the palace. The soldiers of the Regiment of Flanders were as highly excited as their officers ; one of them climbed up the outside of the architecture of the palace to an alarming height, till he reached the windows of the king's bedroom, and shouted *Vive le Roi !* Cornelius was one of those who helped him to descend ; and as he reached the ground the report of a musket told the fate of another of the regiment, who in a paroxysm of loyalty shot himself on the *Place d'Armes*, in mad regret at having listened to some who strove to turn him from his allegiance !

With such results as these before them, the royal family and their party may well be excused if they recovered their confidence in some measure, and deceived themselves awhile. They imagined this occurrence to be the touch-stone of feeling, not only among the military but the people at large ; they misconceived (as we generally do events and objects which are near to us) the dimensions of the experiment which had been tried ; and they flattered themselves into the belief that the scene just acted in the Royal Theatre of Versailles would be repeated in every town throughout the kingdom. This delusion produced the usual effects on the victims. They talked much, but did little ; raised

their voices, not their arms ; overrated their means and under-valued their enemies ; retarded their measures of safety, and hurried on their ruin.

The active agents of the popular party held a different course from this. They saw that there still was danger to their cause ; and they resolved that the flame which had burst forth from the embers of loyalty should be extinguished in the blood of those who raised it. The queen and the Garde-du-Corps were doomed to immediate destruction ; and events rolled on.

The interval between the day of the repast and the fifth of October was not marked by any material occurrence in which our hero was personally concerned. He, in the fulness of his youthful hope, was no doubt deceived like the rest, and could not imagine the possibility of mortal ill to that being whom he elevated above the range of mortality. He almost wholly neglected every thing but his military duties and his devotion to the queen. He fulfilled the first and cherished the latter with equal zeal. His correspondence with his father followed the course of other less interesting affairs : his letters became hurried, unfrequent and rambling, and he betrayed the wanderings of a mind which evidently went astray when it swerved a moment from its one great object. Father O'Collogan saw what was passing with a watchful and gloomy eye. Midst all the simplicity of his nature he possessed a great share of the shrewdness which is common to his countrymen, and his dark anticipations burst forth in many a conversation, exclamation, and quotation, which we shall not stop to record. Bryan Mulcachie viewed the aspect of affairs in a very different light from his confessor. He had become gradually reconciled to his situation, had made himself master of a few important phrases of the language, and being a cheerful and obliging fellow, he had ingratiated himself into the good graces of two or three of the men servants and five or six of the females of the neighborhood. He had been at Paris more than once ; and observing the idleness which was predominant, the neglect of business, the continual talking, singing, dancing and fraternal embracing in the streets, he pronounced the French to be the pleasantest people in the whole 'varsal world out and out ;" and the catastrophe which was at hand burst upon him like a thunder-bolt.

But Bryan Mulcachie did not stand alone ; for such was the ignorance of the cabinet of Versailles as to what was coming to pass, or the absurd affectation or indifference towards it, that on the morning of the fifth of October, the day which was virtually the last of the royal power, Louis, its hapless representative, went out on a shooting party to the woods of Meudon ! Courier after courier arrived from Paris, report followed report, and alarm succeeded to alarm ; but it was not till "the Parisian army" had actually begun its march for Versailles, that a messenger was despatched to summon the king to his palace ; and as the monarch and his train wound their way through the woods which skirt the road by Meudon and Sevres, they could hear the shouts and shots, and mark the tumultuous advance of the infuriate horde, which poured along the line of road parallel to their path.

At the time of the king's arrival at the palace the day was far gone, and Marie Antoinette, filled no doubt with presages of the coming evil

—but such forebodings as strengthen, instead of unnerving a mind like hers—had taken her way, without friends and with but two menial attendants, to her favorite gardens of the Little Trianon, in whose beautiful walks and bowers she then lingered for the last time. Cornelius was at the palace. The guard had been doubled in consequence of the alarming rumors from Paris, and he was one of those on duty. But if even he had not been so, he would have stationed himself some where near the person of his idol—for he knew her to be in danger. He had that morning received two hurried billets from the capital in the handwriting of Armand, one by the post, which had been written the previous night, telling him to be on his guard as a crisis was near. The next was still more brief, but more explicit. It was despatched in the morning, by a private messenger, and contained but one line :—

“Look to the queen—you shall see me to-night.”

In consequence of these ominous words, our hero set off for the palace, where he was met by the adjutant, who warned him for the augmentation of the guard. He was ready for the call, and was, with several of his comrades, standing in the hall of the Garde-du-Corps in the palace, observing the king's arrival, and anxiously looking for that of the queen, when Count de St. Priest, one of the ministers, came from an adjoining chamber, with a note in his hand, in hurried agitation, and said :—

“Gentlemen, which of you can take this to her majesty at the Trianon? There is no time for forms—will you, Sir?” addressing our hero, who stood next to him.

Cornelius took the note, and with a bounding heart, and winged steps, he soon reached the entrance of the Trianon gardens. He burst past the porter, merely uttering “for the queen;” and he was abruptly proceeding in the direction to which the porter pointed, when he was stopped suddenly by the sight of her he sought, as she sat on a bench not many paces from him. She was dressed in a plain white gown, and her head was covered by a large straw hat, the leaf of which concealed her face and her profusion of hair. She held a handkerchief in her hand, and as Cornelius silently marked her, forgetful wholly of his mission, he observed her to put her handkerchief more than once to her eyes. She raised her head and looked towards the west. Thick clouds were gathering, and as she cast her brimming eyes upwards, she wrapped a shawl close round her, warned by the rough blast which shook the yellow leaves from the trees and whirled them through the air. She then rose and advanced a few steps towards the Temple of Venus, just opposite, and close to which is still the bench where she sat that evening; and she was apparently going to enter, when she observed Cornelius. His hat was in one hand, and he advanced, holding the minister's note in the other. He attempted to utter the name of Monsieur de St. Priest, but the words faltered on his lips. She observed his agitation, and took the proffered paper. While she ran her eyes over it, her two valets, who had till now respectfully stood far from her, approached rather nearer, and when she had finished, she calmly turned round, and motioned them to follow. Our hero drew back to let her pass. She walked forwards, and addressed him as he followed.

“And the king, Sir? has he returned?”

“I saw his majesty safely enter the palace,” replied Cornelius.

"Thank God!" uttered she: "and my children—the Dauphin and Madame?" recovering herself, and giving them their titles, as if the first natural expression was less dignified than it ought to be.

"Let your majesty be tranquilized," exclaimed Cornelius: "they are safe in their apartments;" and then he added in a tone of animation; "fear nothing, I beseech your majesty, for aught that is yours! No danger can approach, though it may threaten you."

She stopped a moment, and turned her eyes upon his glowing countenance, and then said with much emotion—

"Ah, Sir!"—after which she made a long pause,—as if shaking away the doubts that overcast her mind—but she added in a quick manner, and with her smile of unrivalled sweetness,

"I know the zeal of all your corps, and believe me, Sir, I have not forgotten, nor am I ungrateful for your individual proofs of attachment. Your reward is I hope at hand."

"Reward!" exclaimed our hero—and he would have added that he was more than repaid—or words of deeper energy—but he felt his voice fail him again; and she, perceiving the strength of his emotion, and probably seeing deeper into its source than even he did, moved forward at a quickening pace, and prevented the utterance of his high-wrought feelings.

They went quickly on by a private way, which had been planned by the queen, and executed under her eye, but which does not now exist—a passage from the palace to the Trianons, winding round by the lower gate in the Rue Maurepas. This was a trellised walk, thickly planted at each side with rose trees, jessamines, and odorous shrubs, which crept up emboweringly, and formed a delightful shade in summer time. At the then advanced period of the season the roof and sides had lost their leafy covering, and were sufficiently open to admit a full view of whoever passed along. The wall of the park was close at one side, and as the queen moved forward with a quick but steady pace, not looking to the right or left, our hero who had recovered himself, and respectfully followed some yards behind, observed a small piece of rolled up paper flung from outside the walls, and dropping through the trellised work on the path between him and the queen. He picked it up, and unfolding it he read, in the ill-concealed and evidently agitated hand writing of Armand,

"Beware of this night. Your life will be attempted. Your natural courage must be your guide, but your only safety is in flight. A friend is watching you, though you believe him false—but gratitude to a queen is not incompatible with duty to our country. Do not be deceived—the hour is come."

No sooner had Cornelius read this, than he saw it was meant for the queen; and while he advanced to present it to her, Armand from behind the wall, pronounced his name, and added "I will meet you at the Dragon's gate."

Our hero presented the paper to the queen, and told her how it reached him. She took it and read it without any visible emotion. She then tore it, and as she flung the scraps away, exclaimed,

"If they come to murder me, I will die then at the king's feet—but I will never fly!"

"For the love of heaven and earth let me entreat your majesty to pause a moment," cried Cornelius, with much agitation. "I know the writer of this paper—let me seek him; his intelligence may be important."

"I know him, too, Sir," answered she indignantly; ingrate that he is, he is unworthy of my fears, or your enquiries. Let us on to the palace."

They were here met by some of the ministers and the great officers of the household, who came to escort the queen; and Cornelius slipped away, and went for a moment to the gate named by Armand, determined to hear what he chose to communicate.

His former companion was waiting for him just outside, in a recess formed by one of a new range of houses about that time commenced, but the completion of which the events of that evening put a stop to. Breathless, pale and agitated, Armand beckoned Cornelius towards him, and threw fearful looks around, dreading the chance of being detected in contact with any one belonging to her service to whom he owed every thing.

"Well, Armand," cried Cornelius, "be quick—I have but a moment."

"And I not so much, Cornelius," replied he. "Come here, close to me;—this is a dreadful hour—I have done my best to save her—I saw you across the wall giving her my note—Heaven grant she will follow my advice and fly—Her life is beset—trust to no appearance of calm, the plot is laid." He was here interrupted by loud vociferations which proceeded from the frantic rabble, headed by the Poissardes, in the open odiousness of female depravity, as they came up from all the avenues in the direction of the palace.

"Is that all?" cried Cornelius impatiently. "Have you nothing to communicate but impotent advice and these too hardy warnings? I must leave you—my duty lies within these gates."

"Which I dare not enter!" said Armand. "My fate is cruel—bitter—maddening!—Here, Cornelius, here, you love, you adore the queen, and are fitting her service. I alas! am not—I feel my weakness, and blush and tremble while I confess it—but I must go through with—must fulfil my destiny. Do you mark this portrait?" While he spoke and hurriedly disengaged the queen's miniature from around his neck, Cornelius gazed on it, and listened to him with fixed impatience.

"This is that portrait which she fastened round this neck with her own gracious, beauteous hands," continued Armand. "I durst not keep it—and I have striven but cannot force myself to destroy it—If found on me it would cause my instant death."

"O give it, give it to me!" cried our hero; "how poor a price would death be for the pride of its possession?"

"It is yours—I meant it for you, and now I give it to you," said Armand hurriedly; and as he pressed Cornelius's hands, in which the miniature was firmly clasped, he burst into convulsive sobs. Cornelius was touched with his evident sufferings, and softened by the proof he had given of his sensibility towards the queen, and his kind feelings to himself. "Come, Armand, come!" said he, "this is the moment of your redemption. Come in with me—the gates are closing—come back to your duty—your honor—your home—come in, come in!"

The porters within were now on the point of closing the gates, alarmed at the increasing crowd which poured down from the avenue de St. Cloud. They called to Cornelius, whose uniform made him an object for their interest—and they told him to hasten or they must be forced to shut him out to the fury of the Parisian mob. He caught Armand's arm for the purpose of leading him in, but the loud bursting shouts of the terrible Poissardes struck again on the hearing of the terrified and trembling apostate.

"Oh no, no, 'tis too late. Oaths of horror bind me—and those sounds are the heralds of death to all within these gates—Oh God! which way must I turn?—They come, they come—let me fly—if seen with you I am inevitably ruined—away, away!—but tell the queen, oh, tell her!" Another hell-burst from the approaching furies sounded still more close. Armand fled, in the direction of the sound—and as Cornelius entered the gate, the last tones of the renegade's voice, which mingled with the grating of the bolts and hinges, were shouts of "Live the people! Live the nation! Down with the tyrants! Down with the king! Down with"—but our hero hurried away, lest he might hear a more damning proof of the coward's shame. He held his hand firm on the picture, against which his heart throbbed strongly, and he soon mingled in the ranks of his fellow guardsmen within the palace walls.

CHAPTER IX.

The tumult without the palace was answered by the consternation within. The turbulent energy of the mob had its counterpart in the perturbed incapacity of the courtiers. The first marched straight and firmly to their object—the latter wavered on every step down which they were descending to destruction. Thirty thousand men, intermixed with bands of these female fiends before-mentioned, poured into Versailles that day. This collection has been called, by a stretch of historical courtesy, the Parisian army. La Fayette was nominally its chief; but he was set in motion by its spontaneous movement, and once on march with the rest, he found it as impossible to command them, as the leader of an ill-tuned orchestra, whose fine tones are overpowered by the jarring discords around him. To oppose the hostile operations of this resolute multitude, the regiment of Flanders, the National Guard, and the Garde-du-Corps, were arrayed in the Place d'Armes. Ineffectual as their opposition might perhaps have proved, they were not, however, allowed to make any. Incertitude as to the steps to be taken, prevented any attempt at vigor. As the first clamors were heard, it was decided that the royal family should immediately retreat under the escort of the garrison, to Rambouillet, there to concert on some measures of safety. But some fatal

treacherous cries of *Vive le Roi!* induced the ministers to abandon that plan. The odious Poissardes, with their large white aprons, which they declared destined for purposes towards the queen too horrible to mention here, now forced their way into the court yard of the palace, and insisted on seeing the king. He consented to their admission, heard their clamorous demands for bread, and apparently succeeded in quieting them; for they retired shouting his name, and singing in a frantic chorus, the song which was so celebrated at the birth of the dauphin, and which ran thus:

CHANSON DES POISSARDES.

Ne craignez pas, cher papa,
D'voir augmenter vot' famille,
Le bon Dieu s'y pourvoira;
Fait's-en tant qu' Versailles en fourmille;
'Y 'eut-il cen Bourbons cheu nous
'Ya du pain et du laurier pour tous.

THE POISSARDES' SONG.

Have no fear, father dear,
To see your brats increase about you,
God is good, to send them cheer;
Let Versailles swarm with them; nor doubt you,
That though a hundred Bourbons call,
We've loaves and laurels for them all.

During this scene, several of the members of the assembly crowded round the queen, and one of them put an anonymous letter into her hands, which had just reached him, and which announced her intended assassination the next morning. She read it calmly, returned it to him from whom she received it, ordered the group to retire, and coolly said, "to-morrow will prove to you how necessary repose is to-night."

Matters appearing thus calm, the Garde-du-Corps were ordered to break up from the Place d'Armes in front of the palace, and to retire to their barracks. This movement was considered by the impetuous mob as setting the seal upon their triumph, and their violence consequently knew no bounds. They assailed the Garde-du-Corps with volleys of stones as they retired, and they fired several musket shots, by one of which one of the guardsmen fell mortally wounded. The troop did not return these assaults, but on arriving at the barrack found that it had been pillaged by the rabble, who had then scattered all over the town in straggling parties, obtaining such refreshments as they could; but committing no other outrage than the one just recorded. Upon the ministers in the palace hearing these events, a second resolution of a retreat to Rambouillet was decided on. The royal carriages were ordered, and the family preparing for the movement, when, just as the horses were about to be harnessed to the carriages, and the crowd looking on, dissatisfied but passively, a young man, who

was the servant to General Beauharnois, the husband of Josephine, afterwards Empress of France, seized one of the bridles, and called aloud to the assembled multitude for assistance, to prevent the escape of the king, and the destruction of the people's liberties. By this prompt and daring act this groom decided the fate of his sovereign, and was the source of his mistress's after-elevation. An actor of the theatre of Versailles stepped forward to his help—the rest of the mob followed his example—the traces were cut—the horses turned into the stables—and the monarchy overthrown. The news of this measure spread dismay within the palace. But one course was left, for that night at least, and the king followed it, by throwing himself under the protection of La Fayette and his army, and professing a confidence in them; which was honest on the part of the king, most just as it regarded the general, but madness as applied to the armed rabble. The main body of the Garde-du-Corps, who were boiling with rage, and from whom some dangerous outburst was expected, were ordered off to Rambouillet, and the king was thus left with no attached defenders, but the handful of the *Garde* actually on duty in the palace; for the whole of the Regiment of Flanders had gone over to the Parisian army, and joined in all their movements.

It was thus that matters stood when the royal family yielded to the persuasions of La Fayette, and retired for the night. This excellent but incompetent man, believing all safe and right, went himself to bed, and the king and most of those within the palace followed the example. The courtiers and their followers dropped off one by one to their several rooms; the long corridors and galleries were gradually deserted; and scarcely a light was seen to glimmer in the vast extent of the palace, except the flitting taper of some domestic, winding up the stairs to his attic room, or pausing for a moment at some window, looking on the court yard, in hopes to catch a glimpse of what was passing in the gloom without. The queen, worn out and overpowered, flung herself into bed at two o'clock in the morning, and ordered her two attendant ladies to do the same. But their attachment to her told them that their first duty was, in this instance, disobedience. They quitted their royal mistress's apartment; and oppressed by a presentiment of danger, they took their post in the anti-chamber, close against the door of the queen's room; and thus slumbered away in the stillness of the night, which was for some hours unbroken, but by the whispers of the Garde-du-Corps, who kept watch in the great room outside the anti-chamber, and by the tramp of the sentinels who paced the court yard and gardens.

Contrasted with the desolate grandeur of this scene in the House of Royalty, was the ruffian sublimity which reigned without. The evening and night were wet, windy, and dark. The ragged clouds swept rapidly through the heavens, scattering showers from their broken skirts, as each irregular gust dissolved their fragments into rain. The ground was wet, and the large unsheltered *Place d'Armes*, with the wide avenues and streets, were covered by the out-stretched bodies of thousands of wretches, who grouped themselves at random in their gloomy bivouac. As many as were provident enough to get shelter had filled the houses, and occupied the beds,

to the exclusion of the trembling inhabitants who kept watch in their parlors and kitchens; and these intruders consisted of all those who had any pretensions to decency in station or feeling. The rest, a large majority, were the refuse of the Paris Fauxbourgs, beings so contaminated as to glory in their own vileness, and to feel a pride in the brutal degradations which they volunteered. Reeling with wine, and reckless of danger, they flung themselves down on the readiest dunghill, and the overflowing gutters washed the carcasses whose impurity was congenial to their streams. Discontented mutterings and low curses mingled with the whistling blast that at times bent the flexible stems of the trees, and shook the rain drops on the slumbering groups below. Their irregular weapons clashed confusedly together, blown down from their ill arranged piles by the wind; and an occasional scream from a cracked trumpet, or the roll of an ill-braced drum, roused up some of the fierce horde—who sunk down again, growing curses on the disturbers of their desperate repose. Females too, the very outcasts of the vile, were abundantly scattered over this peopled desolation. They were to be seen huddled together in dreary fellowship, fatigue and sleep lording it over their depravity,—and drooping their heads upon the breasts in which their woman's milk had turned to gall. Children were there, the urchin followers of the throng, weeping in cold, and wet, and hunger; some calling for the parents they had straggled from, and others slumbering in the arms of wretches, who cherished their offspring from the brute instinct with which the tigress suckles her whelps.

Such were the beings who waited no incitement but the dawn to plunge into deeds of frenzied atrocity.

At half past four o'clock the drowsy eye of morning opened from its cloudy lids upon the scene. The restless mob, irritated by the night's discomforts, their bodies unrefreshed, their hunger unappeased, their vengeance unglutted, rose from their heaps, and shook their draggled garments in the face of the dawn. The inhabitants of the palace mostly slept: a few of the more nervous had passed the night in snatched and wearying slumbers, and started at every blast of wind that moaned through the doors or window shutters. None but the resolute band of Gardes-du-Corps, among which was our hero, had thoroughly outwatched the night; and they, as they perceived the streaks of morning light stealing through the scanty foliage of the woods, prepared themselves to meet a day that bore a kingdom's fate upon its wings.

A few straggling shots fired from the Place d'Armes was the only signal for the attack on the palace. In the next instant the court yard was filled, and the great doors forced open by a simultaneous burst. The chief rush of the mob was up the grand marble staircase which led to the queen's apartments, and at the head of which opens from the landing place the hall of the Garde-du-Corps.—Next to this room, which was occupied by the guard, was the anti-chamber, where the queen's ladies had stationed themselves with their women. At the first alarm several of the guards rushed out to the head of the stairs, and a fierce conflict began. Many of the assailants fell, and their furious companions trampling across the

bodies, completed the death which the bullets of the guard had commenced. The imperfect light gave the advantage to the defending party. They made great slaughter, and but two of their brave troop were killed. The wounded were dragged back into the hall, and the whole body at length retreated thither, and barricaded the door inside. But this delicate barrier of gilded and painted pannels soon flew shattering in, before the force of the plebian blows and the guardsman who stood in the gap was partly protected from the hacking sabres of the assailants by a defence formed by his carbine, which, after having discharged he placed across the door, and held firmly with each hand. The fragments of the wood broke the deadliest of the blows, and he only received two cuts on the head and face, which covered him with blood, but did not move him from his post. His comrades behind him discharged their pistols under his arms, and thus for several hour-like minutes, kept the whole crowd at bay. The intrepid sentinel looked frequently round, and cast his straining glances at the door of the queen's antichamber, as if only thinking of her! At length, in the midst of this tumult, the terrified women could not resist their agitated curiosity; and one of them opened the door to see what was passing. At the instant she put forward her pale face, the bleeding sentinel, Cornelius—for it was he—cried in a hoarse voice, "Save, save the queen! fly and bolt the doors on us!" The spectral face disappeared; and as the door closed and was bolted beyond, our hero, exhausted and again wounded, sunk on the floor, and gave free passage to the rushing horde.

In the close wedged crowd but little injury was inflicted on the remaining guardsmen. The mob hustled in so thickly that they impeded their own wish for blood, and in the confusion and delay of forcing open the door of the anti-room, the queen had time to spring from her bed, awakened by the screams of the women. She fled, undressed as she was, towards the little private door leading to the king's apartments; her first distracted thoughts turning towards him and her children. With feelings of horror, she discovered that this door was fastened outside, and all the efforts of the women to force it open, and with their shrieks for help, were almost drowned by the uproar of the mob from the rooms beyond. In the midst of their despair, one of the king's valets hurrying through the passage from behind, opened the door; and the whole party, headed by the queen, rushed towards the king's bed-room, where the children were found, the king himself having gone to seek their mother. He soon returned, and the scene of momentary happiness, in the midst of the misery around, must be imagined better than it can be told.

While Cornelius lay bleeding and faint upon the ground, his only care was to preserve the miniature of the queen from the trampling feet of the crowd, which struck upon him and his wounded comrades. With his hands covering the treasure which lay on his breast, and his face turned towards the wall close to which he lay, he heard a low muttering voice pronounce his name. He looked faintly up through the standing mass, and by the light of the torches which had been carried in, he discovered the pale face of Armand, who was groping round, and evidently searching for him on the floor. The strong impulse of self-

preservation made him answer the call, and Armand soon relieved him from the pressure. He stooped down, and tearing off Cornelius' coat, unperceived by the mob, who were then rushing through the forced entrance into the antichamber, he wrapped him in the short cloak which had hung on his own shoulders. He then drew him towards the landing-place, and was preparing to convey him down the stairs, proclaiming to those who advanced, that it was a wounded patriot whom he was saving; when a tall and powerful man, half dressed, in black breeches and stockings, and his shirt-collar flying open, burst his way through every impediment, advanced towards our hero, looked at his face a moment, lifted him up as though he had been a child, and carried him down the stairs upon his shoulder, without speaking a word, and, followed by the astonished Armand, who it must be told, had taken no part in the attack, but had waited trembling below, till, all resistance being over, he was enabled to seek his friend without danger to himself.

Cornelius, revived by the air, soon recognized the face of his preserver, as his own lay close to it, over the broad shoulder which bore him. It was Father O'Colligan, who, on the first alarm, had rushed to the scene of action, in the turbulent anxiety for his young friend—having prudently divested himself of his casseck, his band, and hat—symbols of his profession, which, if displayed to the mob, would have doomed him to destruction, but without which he readily passed through the heterogeneous crowd, as an able-bodied light-clad patriot. Arrived at the foot of the stairs, calling out for room, and suiting the action to the word, by shouldering right and left through the living mass, he was met in the entrance-hall by Bryan Mulchaie, who having passed a sleepless night in the deserted barrack-room, haunted by the fear of the Black Captain's ghost, and anxiety for his master's safety, had sallied out at the early report of fire arms, furnished with a bludgeon, and hurrying towards the palace with the crowd, had entered it in the hopes of finding Cornelius, alive or dead. It was a happy thing for both Cornelius and his supporter, that Bryan could not make himself intelligible to the crowd; for his mingled lamentations and abuse of the people, as soon as he saw his master bleeding on the priest's back, would have betrayed all, and proved a sentence of death to the whole party. Father O'Colligan pushed Bryan aside with the rest, as the poor fellow came blubbering up to his wounded master; and he was fain to follow, without farther explanation, the long strides of the priest, who neither stopped nor spoke till he deposited his burthen in one of the wards of the town hospital, where Voisin, the chief surgeon, was already busily employed in dressing some of the wounded mob. Armand kept close to the body of his former friend; and while he and the priest satisfied themselves, by the assurance of the surgeon, that his hurts were by no means dangerous, Bryan, seeing nothing short of death in Cornelius's livid face and motionless body, began deliberately to chant forth the Irish howl.

"Wirashtraw! Wirashtraw! Oh, why did you die! Why did you leave your father and your people, Wirashtraw!"

"Howld your tongue, you stupid devil!" cried Father O'Colligan, "how dare you have the impudence to tell your master that he's dead!"

"Wirashtraw! Wirashtraw!" exclaimed Bryan, wringing his hands.

"Whist your noise, then, I tell you again, you spalpeen, or I'll lay the print of your cheek on my four fingers and thumb!" vociferated the priest, foaming with rage.

"Arrah, why did you die?" continued Bryan, looking wofully on Cornelius; when the secular arm of his indignant confessor was raised high against him, and the iron fist came sledge-like upon his ear, and laid him sprawling on the floor. At this instant five or six of the wounded guardsmen were brought in by some of their companions, who had made their way through the rabble; but scarcely were they received into the hospital, when a group of the ruthless wretches pursued them, and attempted to force their way through the outer room, to put them to death.

The priest's presence of mind was here conspicuous, and of the utmost importance. He advanced to the outer room with great calmness, having first snatched up some of the instruments of surgery which lay on the table; and his shirt being covered with Cornelius's blood, he had altogether a very professional air. Thus accoutred, he presented himself to the furious mob, and met their murderous threats by a profuse display of all the wine intended for the use of the sick, and by assurances that there were none of the Garde-du-Corps in that part of the hospital. M. Voisin, the surgeon, had in the mean time ordered the attendant *sœurs de charité* to hastily clothe the wounded guardsmen in the coarse covering used for the poor patients; and this being promptly done during the priest's parley with the ruffians without, no trace was left by which they might distinguish their foes from their friends. The only person in danger of falling a victim was Bryan; for when the good women saw him lying crying upon the floor, they supposed him to be wounded with the others, and they accordingly proceeded to cover him up with the long brown linen wrapper. He kicked and struggled with his usual violence, and exclaimed against this proceeding, until the clash of the weapons, and the hideous vociferations without, brought him to reason, by nearly depriving him of his senses, and he passively submitted to be lifted up by four or five of his kind-hearted attendants, who placed him, more dead than alive, in the same bed with a livid-looking guardsman, whose ghastly countenance, close by poor Bryan's cheek, made him fancy himself already laid in his grave. Armand had voluntarily thrown himself into another ward, and lay with a throbbing heart, and the bed-clothes covering his face, when the rabble burst in, accompanying Father O'Collogan; and seeing nothing to indicate the military character of those they observed, they were persuaded that the guardsmen had been carried off by some private passage to another part of the building; and thus baffled in their first bloody intention, they dispersed towards the palace, in hopes of finding some readier victims for the sacrifice they intended.

While this was passing at the hospital, the palace presented a scene of indescribable terror and confusion; the splendid halls and tapestried apartments being the theatre of bloody and protracted outrage. As soon as the queen fled from her sleeping-room, and the doors of the anti-chamber were forced open, some of the Garde-du-Corps had dexterously thrown themselves between the mob and the room where they supposed she was still in her bed. They there renewed the

contest with the assailants, who were at last persuaded by the assurances of the household servants that the queen had escaped. Quitting the point of immediate attack, they then rushed by another passage down towards the gallery called *l'ail de Boeuf*, hoping there to intercept her flight; but she was safely sheltered in the apartment of the king, where with her children in her arms and her husband beside her, she was firmly prepared for whatever might happen. The small but devoted band of the Garde-du-Corps, on being assured of the queen having left her bed-room, passed through it into the *ail de Boeuf*, and by barricading the doors, were able for awhile to resist the efforts of the grenadiers of the Parisian National Guard to burst them open. But as the resistance must have been in the end unavailing, one of the guardsmen, named De Chevanne, resolved to devote himself a victim to the chance of saving his comrades; and he threw himself into the anti-chamber alone—in the midst of his foes. Struck by this act of isolated intrepidity, the assailants paused, and he in a few moments of earnest eloquence made one of those effective appeals to the turbulent passions of men, which are oftener successful in France than in all other countries of the globe. In a few minutes the National Guard and the Garde-du-Corps were seen like brothers, exchanging cockades and caps, embracing and shouting together,—*"Vive le Roi! Vive la Nation! Vivent les Gardes-du-Corps!"*

From this moment all was safe. The impulsion spread like wild-fire through the troops, and from them was caught by the people. The palace was cleared, and instead of the atrocious threats and murderous vociferations, mixed with the clash of arms, and tramp of a furious multitude, the profaned but now uncrowded corridors and halls echoed the joyous embracings of the household, the boisterous gratulation of men, and the hysteric laugh of women, all nearly as frantic with delight as they had so lately been with fear.

For some hours after this, a boisterous incertitude prevailed throughout. The straggling elements of the mob power, which had been decomposed during the night, were now rapidly massing once more, under the effect of the stimulus which the attack on the palace had given to all. The *Place d'Armes*, the court yards, and the terraces were thickly thronged with the armed multitude, who insisted with imperative demands that the king and his family should abandon Versailles, and accompany them to Paris. Resistance was at this crisis vain, and it is useless to record the names of those who advised an impotent refusal. The king gave his consent to the measure. "I confide myself to the people," said he, "let them do with me as they please;" and the preparations for departure were hurried on. But the outrageous impatience of the rabble would not be satisfied without the visible testimony of obedience to their commands, and the actual presence of their victims. They vociferated in angry tones for the queen's appearance at the balcony which opens from the room where Louis XIV. expired, upon the marble-paved court called *La Cour de Marbre*. Imprecations and threats accompanied the call, and those who surrounded the queen and who heard the tone, tremblingly entreated her not to appear, as they little doubted the intention of the mob to fire at her as she stood, and thus complete their

diabolical design against her life. She alone stood calm and courageous at this awful moment. She took her children one in each hand, and stepped out upon the balcony with a confident mien. "No children; no children! send them back—stand out *alone!*" shouted by a thousand voices, were the horrid orders that assailed her. She did not hesitate a moment, but putting the children in at the window-door behind her, she turned round again towards the crowd, and raising her eyes and her clasped hands to heaven, she stood awhile in the undismayed conviction that each successive moment was her last. A murmur of astonished approbation rolled hoarsely through the throng, and of all the sinewy arms that bore a weapon among it, but one was raised to take her life, thus offered as it were to their assault. One ruffian, flushed with fury and covered with clotted blood from the morning's conflict, stood at the corner on the left of the *Cour de Marbre*, on the very spot where the assassin Damiens had placed himself to strike at the heart of Louis XV. Seeing the queen thus exposed, within thirty paces of his design, and while the rushing tide of popular inconstancy was on the point of turning in her favor, he levelled a musket at her breast and snapped a trigger. The piece went off, but the bullet flew high in the air, almost perpendicularly over the roof of the palace: for an arm beside the murderer had struck the weapon up at the very instant of its being discharged. The wretch looked round on him who had frustrated his aim, but did not recognize Cornelius in the pale and wounded being who leaned against the corner of the wall beside him. Our hero, who, devoured by agitation, had insisted on crawling from the hospital, weak as he was, and had placed himself in this position, supported by Father O'Collogan, thus saved the life of her for whose service he lived, and instantly knew in the would-be murderer, that very soldier of the Regiment of Flanders who a short month before had in an explosion of unprincipled loyalty climbed up the palace walls to shout blessings on the king! Prompt as the voice of the storm which answers the lightning's flash, the voice of Cornelius followed the flash of the inebriate madman's weapon. "Long live the queen!" once more burst from his pallid lips, and the words were repeated in a shout from the tumultuous assemblage, which rung from the fifty niches in the surrounding walls, filled with the busts and statues of emperors and kings.

The queen retired with unruffled and dignified demeanor, and then the loud voice of the sovereign people called for the subject king. As he came forth a new exclamation arose. "To Paris! To Paris!" was the general cry, and the monarch with meek loyalty replied, "Yes, my children, since you wish me to accompany you to Paris, I consent to go—but on the one condition, that I shall not be separated from my wife and children." Cries of *Vive le Roi!* were the reply, and when he next asked security for his faithful guards, "*Vivent les Gardes-du-Corps!*" answered his demand. The names of the king and the nation were then blended in a general shout, and a stunning discharge of artillery and musketry from the throng rattled the window frames of the houses, and shook the hearts of the inhabitants of Versailles.

At one o'clock, under a beautiful sky and warm sun, the proces-

sion moved forward on its five hours' march towards the capital, with circumstances which do not come within the range of this story; and Marie Antoinette threw back her farewell looks on the splendid residence of fifteen years, the scene of pleasures and grandeurs, and admiration, and influence, that rarely fall to the lot of the most fortunate of queens.

Cornelius lingered till the last moment; not would he consent to the entreaties of Father O'Collogan for his return to the hospital, until the echoes of the royal carriage were inaudible, and his dimmed and swimming eyes scarcely saw the confusion of the procession, as it slowly moved along the broad and crowded avenue, which leads in a direct line from the Palace-yard towards Paris.

Armand had early stolen away, no one knew whither: having satisfied himself of Cornelius's safety, and thus eased his conscience, in some measure, from the bitter reproaches which were ever rising up, self-created, in his mind; for he felt that in preserving this devoted adherent to the queen, he did more for her than he could be effected by any actual effort of his own dastard fidelity. Bryan with difficulty submitted to the orders of his master, to remain in the hospital; but when he saw him return leaning on the arm of the Priest, he applied himself with assiduity to every office which his wounded and afflicted master required at his hands.

CHAPTER X.

The public events which followed close upon these memorable transactions are in the memory of every one; and having no immediate connection with our hero, need not be snatched from history to swell the limits of a story like this. A mock inquiry into the outrages perpetrated against the Royal Family was made by the National Assembly, and ended as might be expected, in nothing being done to punish the guilty, whose impunity was high above the reach of their accusers. Some questions were put to Marie Antoinette, as to her personal knowledge of what had passed. "I saw all—I felt all—and I have forgotten all,"—was her reply.

Two observations on these events—fatal alike to despotism and true freedom, seem obvious—one with relation to the king, the other to the country. Louis should at that pregnant moment, the fifth of October, have taken one of two decisive courses. He should have fought or *abdicated*. He should have boldly placed himself at the head of his army—or wholly prostrated himself at the feet of his people. It was clear that blood must flow in the struggle. The only question, was, whether it was to be that of the king or the crowd. His weakness was to have steered a middle course at such a crisis—theirs to have upheld his means of continuing it after.

They should have at once *deposed* him. For, having sunk him in the depths of contempt, it was vain to keep up his show of power; and the principle of overthrowing the monarchy by years of disgrace, was at once unworthy of the nation, and cruel to the individual. As for the queen, her days of wretchedness had commenced—to end but with her life. She took possession of the Tuileries, her palace-prison, with an aching mind; and for many dreary months endured those preparatory trials, for sufferings to which neither history nor fancy have recorded or imagined a parallel.

Cornelius submitted, with an impatience which may be well conceived, to a fortnight's confinement in the hospital of Versailles. His imprudence in going out on the morning of his wounds, and mixing in all the agitations of the day, added considerably to the injury he had received. Anxiety for the queen cut deeper than the sabres of the mob. During this imprisonment, Bryan never quitted his master for an hour, but Father O'Collogan went almost daily to Paris to learn intelligence of what was going on; and though Cornelius's sanguine mind saw matter of high hope in the apparent loyalty which was loudly professed by the capital, the Priest, in the bluntness of his sincerity, took especial care that his young friend's recovery should not be hastened by any delusive expectations, which his gloomy forebodings might have power to chill. He saw things in the very worst possible light, and it was in the nature of his diction to clothe his dark thoughts in still darker words.

"Every thing's lost entirely, out and out, my jewel," said he one day on his return from Paris, as he threw himself panting into a chair by the side of Cornelius's bed.

"How, what? explain yourself, my good Sir—has any thing happened to the queen?" cried Cornelius starting up.

"Keep yourself cool—keep yourself cool, honey," replied the priest, "nothing has happened to her yet. She's in her snug quarters, 'till they take her off by poison or otherwise—and his majesty nor the children isn't murdered—at least they wern't when I left Paris—so make yourself aisy about them."

"What then, Sir, is it? explain yourself for heaven's sake."

"What is it! why, it's every thing that's bad, that's what it is.—It's the clergy—it's religion—it's the Catholic Church they're attacking.—But it stands on a rock, and the devil himself could'n't puff it down! That's what they're at. They're threatening to rob the church, and to scatter the clergy all over the wide world;—that thieving assembly! I told you all along what it would come to."

"Why, what is done?" asked Cornelius.

"Every thing, I tell you; they are going to cut down the benefices, and to rob the cathedrals, and to get rid of the bishops, and to banish the curates,—I see it all straight forment me, although it hasn't come to pass yet."

"What has put all this into your head, my dear sir?"

"I'll tell you that then;—it's no later nor this morning, that I went into that stink of the devil, the *Palais Royal*, and I heard a villain, mounted on a stool, tell the blackguards round about him, every word that I now tell you; and, forebode that, when he had finished,

THE GARDE-DU-CORPS.

he took a book out of his pocket, and what do you think it was? why, the Bible, the Bible!—you know the Bible, Cornelius,—that's the Old and New Testament; you know that?"

"To be sure, sir."

"Well, then, he took the Bible, and he dashed it down in under him, and jumped upon it, and tore it in pieces!"

"And what did the people do, sir?"

"Why, they danced and sung, and blasphemed, and swore vengeance against all the kings and queens and priests on the face of the earth,—that's what they did, unfortunate wretches that they are!"

"And what did you do, Sir?"

"What did I do! why I did what they did to be sure; I buttoned my brown coat up about me, and I danced and sung and shouted my way through the rascallions, as merry as the best of them:—

Si Rome fueris, Romano visito mort.

When in Rome, no man
Should act unlike a Roman.

That's my motto on such occasions, and the Lord forgive me, if I did a sin in saving my life for his service, and for yours, my dear child, for I thought of you all the while, and didn't like the notion of being torn to pieces by the ruffians, (which they surely would have done, if they knew who it was that was in it,) and leave you in this miserable place to die in despair, without a friend to pray one *profundis* for your soul."

Such was the general tenor of the priest's communications, by which he meant to comfort and support his friend's drooping spirits; and on such foundation as the event just narrated, he built, and after all not unwisely, his predictions of the sea of troubles which was about to overflow the land.

Cornelius, by the attention of his surgeon, and those exertions of mind which aid the efforts of art, recovered rapidly from the effects of his wounds, and the fever which followed his incautious exposure to agitation and fatigue. As soon as he was allowed to venture abroad, without actually trenching on the outward limits of prudence, he repaired to Paris, there to satisfy himself as to the situation of the queen. Accompanied by Father O'Collogan, he reached the palace of the Tuileries, and being known to some of the servants, he readily obtained entrance, and an opportunity of seeing one of his acquaintance, a gentleman who held an office near the person of the king. From him he learned every particular which had occurred since the outrageous events at Versailles, including the dispersion of the Garde-du-Corps, and their being replaced in their attendance on the royal person by what was called the constitutional guard of Paris. Our hero also learned that several of his comrades in the gallant defence of the Palace of Versailles had been recognized and insulted by the mob; and he found that a strict avoidance of publicity became essential to that personal safety, which he only valued as it might afterwards afford him a chance of devoting himself to the well-being of her for whom he felt himself every hour more deeply interested.

He therefore took measures for removing from Versailles, where he was so generally known, and in a few days he finally abandoned that town, where in the short space of five months, such a rapid rush of incidents had taken place, chequering his heretofore tranquil life, and nurturing emotions and passions before unknown to him, but now hurrying him on to the completion of the destiny in whose impulsion they had birth.

He took a small lodging in one of the suburbs, half way up the hill of Montmartre, where he was gratified in the feeling that he could distinguish the residence of the queen, among the mass of surrounding buildings; and whence he almost fancied himself to look down, like some unknown but protecting spirit, watching over her safety. Bryan Mulcahie was here more than ever useful to him, and he found in the faithful assiduity and the quaint humor of this artless creature a relief from the oppressive reflections which crowded on his solitude. Much as Father O'Colloghan felt desirous of accompanying his friend, he had duties still more urgent to perform. His parish required his care more than ever, for he found all his exertions unavailing to keep the stragglers from his flock from becoming every day more numerous, in spite of all that his energetic efforts could effect, in the way of persuasion or threat—the hopes of heaven, or the promises of hell. His natural buoyancy of mind kept him up under these vexations, and he trudged frequently along, with a staff in his hand, to pay a few hours visit to Cornelius at Montmartre, and unboast himself, while partaking his homely repast, of his sorrows and prognostics, pastoral and political.

Cornelius passed, in this unvaried retirement, the whole of the latter part of the year 1789; and the frosts of winter began to dissolve under the tepid breath of the succeeding spring, ere he found any adequate excitement to make him quit the hill to which he had thus become, as it were, naturalized. His occupations during the earliest of these dreary months had been all of the mind. He had no bodily employment; and his only exercise was his daily walk into Paris, to acquire intelligence of the queen. He saw her frequently, omitting no opportunity of watching her whenever she went out to drive, and being a regular attendant at the chapel of the palace twice every week. There he used to gaze on her as she paced the long gallery through ranks of military, who were more her jailers than her guards; and he followed every movement of her soul-lit eye, which pierced the serried files, to discover the friends whose looks gave warrant of their attachment. Among the faithful band she never once missed our hero, whose passion grew and ripened in the beams of her speaking glance. He made some attempts at study, but they were in vain. His fancies and his feelings went on in eddying circles, set in motion by the one passion, which had sunk so deep in his heart; and every power of reflection or imagination revolved in confusion round the point on which his fate seemed fixed.

During this period the queen bore with the fortitude and dignity which were her most striking characteristics, all the griefs that crowded on her. She devoted herself totally to her duties as a mother, and superintended in every thing the education of the unfortu-

nate dauphin and his sister. She refused every solicitation which was pressed upon her to quit France alone, and leave the king and the people to complete the formation of the constitution, without any possible pretext for accusing her of its delay. She replied, to those who advised the measure, that she never could quit the king and her children; that if she thought herself the only mark of public hatred, she would willingly sacrifice her life; but that she saw that the destruction of the monarchy was the object in view, and that in abandoning France, she would only gain the cowardly advantage of saving herself.

She also rejected every proposition to go to the theatre, or have concerts at the palace; but she dined twice a week in public with the king, according to the ancient custom. To form a real notion of her feelings at this period, we must hear her speak her own sentiments, which were thus expressed in a letter which she wrote to the Duchess de Polignac:—

"I cannot restrain my tears on reading your letters. You talk of my *courage*: it is much less necessary for my own immediate support in these frightful times, than to keep up the spirits of those who surround me. I am oppressed by the heavy weight of my situation; and were it not that my heart is devoted to my husband, my children, and my friends, I should wish to sink under it. But you all sustain me in my trials. I owe it to your attachment to bear up against every thing; but alas! I bring you nothing but misfortune, and all your sufferings are on my account."

With the exception of going to two or three parties given by the Princess Lamballe, in her apartments in the palace, the queen remained during the whole of this dreary winter in complete seclusion, —all her conversations with her friends bearing upon the subject of the Revolution, their chief object being to ascertain by what means she had so totally lost the good opinion and attachment of the fickle people.

To recompense her in some measure for the public hostility, and to show their attachment to the king, the nobility who were then in Paris felt it their duty to attend constantly at the Tuilleries, and an appearance of royal power was thus preserved, in weak signs of ceremony, while every essential of authority was rapidly dissolved. A party, insignificant, less from its numbers than its imprudence, endeavored to uphold the king's prerogative by an intractable display of loyalty. Women, in their zeal, wore large *bouquets* of lilies, and knots of white ribbons, in contrast to the national cockades, which were almost universally borne by the people. Frequent quarrels took place in the theatres and the streets. The most violent language was held by the royalists—the sure sign of weakness; and levity and imprudence were throughout opposed to the persevering audacity which struck at the foundations of the throne.

The projects of the republicans advanced so quickly, that many of those who first opposed the court on just and constitutional principles, were now becoming disgusted, and withdrew from a contest in which they foresaw nothing but mortification and defeat. The royalists, finding this moderate and middle party giving way before the

violence of the mob, and perceiving that no barrier existed to keep its overflowings from reaching themselves, were impressed with the necessity of the royal family's flight from a power which it could not oppose. Many plans were therefore in agitation, in the winter of 1790-91 for the king's escape. The most celebrated, the most impracticable, and the most fatal to its author, was that of the Marquis de Favras. This ardent partizan had formed the project of raising an army of thirty thousand men, to march upon Paris and carry off the royal family. It is most probable that both the king and queen were privy to this design. It is certain that she at least, with the decision which marked her character, had long seen the necessity of the attempt at escape which the king so long opposed, and at length tried but to be ruined by its failure.

The unfortunate Favras, after many efforts to raise funds sufficient for the furtherance of his enterprise, was betrayed by some of those to whom he confided his project, and was offered up a victim to the popular fury. He was hanged in the *Place de Greve*, in the month of February, 1790, and his heroic conduct to the last inspired many others with fresh courage in the cause he died for, while his failure gave a lesson of prudence to those who were pursuing the same object.

Cornelius narrowly escaped being implicated as an accomplice in this affair, and as such, perhaps of suffering the fate of its chief mover. He had heard of the proceeding of Favras, and in his ardor to signalize himself in the queen's cause, he was on the point of joining in the enterprise, and offering his services, when a friend with whom he had almost daily communication, dissuaded him from his intention. No common arguments could have held him back; but the influence of this friend proceeded from a source which our hero looked on as sacred. The name of that person is immaterial to the readers of this story, but it was that of one well acquainted with the secret sentiments of the queen; and she knew too well the value of her best friends, to suffer them to devote themselves to ruin in wild attempts, while she hoped the day to be so near when they might effectually give their co-operation in some feasible plan of escape—Cornelius therefore waited anxiously for the orders which were to put his active devotion to the test.

Notwithstanding the impatience which at intervals seemed preying on him, the time passed over with a rapidity known only to those whose minds are occupied by the never-ceasing contemplation of one adored object. Cornelius's sentiments acquired every day an increasing tinge of that deep devotion which colors the mind of the enthusiast. In proportion as the difficulties of Marie Antoinette increased, so did she appear to his view more admirable, and the changes which seemed each hour reducing her to the level of a common life, removed her in his estimation to a distance more elevated for those who really loved her. His views of her character were certainly not dispassionate—for he was incapable of seeing what others thought her errors. But the more strictly impartial the mind that examines her conduct—the more rigid the inquiry instituted into it by the lover of truth, who reads, inquires, and reflects upon her life,

the more firm must be the opinion that pronounces her a woman wholly innocent of crime, and whose very failings shine through the thick veil of her miseries, with a light that might rival the virtues of those less assailed by temptation, or broken down by persecution. The loud voice of calumny which so long assailed her, is almost mute, because the personal and political hatred which inspired it has nearly died away with the generation to which she belonged. The fact that not one charge was *proved* against her that could affect her reputation as a virtuous woman and devoted wife, might, even in her life-time, have been thought sufficient to doom her slanderers to infamy—for then the whole pack of human motives were in full chase, from which no character had a chance of escape; and had the faintest shadow of guilt been reflected from an act of hers, there existed thousands of enemies on the watch to embody it into a palpable accusation. But among the folios of slander and torrents of abuse with which her reputation was assailed, not one *fact*, however slight or isolated, was ever substantiated, while every testimony of those who saw her most, and knew her best, tends to establish her innocence on every charge. Much has been written against her, and more spoken. Loud assertion and whispered insinuation have been busy with her fame. Many, no doubt imposed upon by the hardihood of her calumniators, believed in her guilt upon the assumption of public opinion—but *now* when all has been heard against her, which hired traducers could assert, or credulous dupes believe—now that the natural weakness which leads men to imagine, and the vile passions which urge them to invent ill of their contemporaries are all hushed, it is scarcely possible that there exists one person who can believe in her impurity, after having examined the question of her conduct on the spot where she lived, and among those of all parties to whom her life was known.

With such an object in his heart, seen through the medium of enthusiastic adoration, our hero wandered about the heights of Montmartre, with a sort of visionary elevation of intellect. He has stood in the early morning, when the winter sun first peered over the horizon of houses to the eastward, and listened to the bells awakening the population of the city below, to the labors and tumults of the day; and he gazed with breathless intensity on the sublimity of the vast masses of building stretching far and wide, in which no sign of human life was visible to him, but which covered the arena of conflicting millions, whose struggle shook the world. He has, from another point, watched the red sun sink in dissolving mists beyond the wooded hills of St. Cloud, and throw his burning beams upon the river and the city, making every wave and every pane of glass in which they were reflected, shine with diamond brilliancy. Again he has walked along the ridge, while the night fell thick around him, and the windmills on the summit looked like huge sentinels waving their giant arms. He has looked down where the vapors shut out the view of the city, and listened to his solemn hum, which sounded like the rushing tide; while the lights glimmering through the mists, looked like the reflection of the stars in the bosom of ocean, and the steeples of the churches, piercing the vapor, might have been supposed so many tall vessels floating on the surface of the sea. But in

all these varieties of aspect, the one feeling mingled ; and Cornelius would start in the midst of his abstraction, and rush hurriedly down the hill, nor cease until he found himself in the sight, or at least in the close vicinity, of her whose imagined presence was the inspiration of all his movements.

CHAPTER XI.

It was during the month of March that our hero became suddenly changed in looks and manner. Instead of the indifferent air and vacant expression which had before marked his appearance, the astonished Bryan now perceived him to move about with a vivacity that he had not for months exhibited, while his animated features seemed worked upon by some great purpose. His ramblings on the hill had almost ceased, and his visits to Paris became much more frequent. Father O'Collogan, who regularly made his journey to Montmartre twice, and sometimes even three times a week, and who had been always sure of finding Cornelius at home on the days appointed, was now often obliged to wait for his return from the city for whole hours beyond his promised time ; and once or twice he was forced to go back to Versailles, greatly disquieted at the arrival of written excuses from his young friend, and somewhat mortified by his constant refusal to confess the causes of his protracted absence. Bryan, who talked freely with the priest on this mysterious change, and who was not nice in his conjectures, proposed on one occasion to prove his fidelity by following his master into town, and watching his movements ; but the indignant elevation of Father O'Collogan's clenched fist, and the remembrance of its operations on a former occasion, made Bryan instantly renounce his mean-spirited but warm-hearted intention.

It was sometime before the secret of these absences was revealed to the priest, but Bryan was left ignorant of them to the last, satisfying himself with some conjectures as to their cause, congenial to his own natural and national fancies. The fact was, that Cornelius had entered deeply into the plot of several royalists, headed by the Count d'Inisdal, for surprising the guard of the Tuileries, and carrying off the king. This plan was constructed with prudence, was known to both the king and queen, and had every probability of success. Many of the nobles were concerned in it, and the night was at last fixed for its execution. Cornelius quitted his lodgings that evening, leaving every thing in its usual state, so as to excite no suspicion in the old man and his wife who were the owners of the house. He said he was going to the theatre, and he ordered Bryan to attend him, for he was resolved not to abandon him at this crisis, and had stipulated for his being employed as a mute agent in the enterprise. He walked down the hill with a light step, and his only regret was that

his solemn oath obliging him not to divulge the secret, he was forced to leave Father O'Colloghan ignorant of his departure, and to trust to chance for a safe opportunity of informing him of its results.

The hour of ten sounded from the various clocks of Paris—the carriages were ready—the confidential partakers in the enterprise at their posts—and the section of National Guards then on duty at the palace gained over, when the Count d'Inisdal, the resolute chief of the confederates, bent his steps towards the Tuileries, to warn the king of all being in readiness, and to re-assure the spirits of those for whom he and his friends were risking every thing. He arrived at the apartments of one of the ladies highest in the queen's confidence, and having explained himself fully, he begged of her to go down to the queen's apartments, where the royal party were at that moment playing whist, and to get the king's positive consent, that the attempt should be put in execution. An attendant gentleman, also fully in the royal confidence, undertook this office; and entering the chamber, he delivered Count d'Inisdal's message. No one made the least reply. The queen impatient at the king's irresolution, said to him, "Sir, do you hear what has been said?"

"Yes, yes, I hear it," replied the king, continuing his game.

Monsieur, the king's brother, addressing the gentleman with his usual familiar habit, as if he was calling in theatrical language for a repetition of a song, exclaimed,

"Pray give us that pretty verse again if you please, Sir." He then said a word or two to the king, persuading him to reply, but his majesty remained silent; when the queen, with her tone of prompt decision, exclaimed,

"It is absolutely necessary, Sir, to say something or other." The king at length said—

"Then tell Monsieur d'Inisdal that I cannot consent to the plan for carrying me off."

The queen, who saw through the irresolution which prompted this dubious answer, hoped by a turn of pronunciation and emphasis to convey an approbation in the very words of refusal.

"You hear, Sir," said she to the gentleman, "you hear the king's reply; and you will not fail to tell it to Monsieur d'Inisdal faithfully. The king cannot *consent* that they carry him off."

The gentleman retired; and the queen immediately set about her preparations of flight; not doubting for a moment that the zeal of the party in the plot would make them interpret favorably the words which she had so pointedly uttered. She was busied till midnight packing up her jewels and the few other valuable articles which she meant to take with her; and for several hours after she paced her chamber with anxious steps, looked out at the windows into the stillness of the courts and gardens, and could not persuade herself that the project was abandoned, until the streaks of morning light separated the grey clouds and dimmed the flame of her solitary lamp.

Cornelius, who had worked his feelings to that intense pitch suited to an enterprise in which he felt his whole hope at stake, waited in silent impatience at the post which was assigned to him. Bryan stood firmly beside his master, not knowing what was coming to pass

—but ready to brave any thing so *lacked*. It is unnecessary to dwell on the deep disappointment of our hero, when Count d'Inisdal came to the place of rendezvous about eleven o'clock; and relating to the trusty band assembled for his purpose, what had passed at the palace, and speaking bitterly of the king, he exclaimed—"I understand him—he wishes by this conduct to anticipate consequences, and throw the whole blame on us who devote ourselves for him." A short consultation ensued, and the attempt was totally abandoned.

This failure disheartened the hopes of the royalists. New plans were imagined, but none advanced towards completion. Advice of all kinds was daily offered to the queen, but nothing was effected for her relief. She would in nothing separate herself and her fate from that of the king and her children. Dangers pressed on, but found her undaunted; and one night, when Louis, alarmed for her safety by some random shot fired on the terrace of the Tuileries, flew to her bed room, and found her in the children's apartments, and holding the Dauphin in her arms, he said, somewhat hurriedly—"I have been looking for you—you have agitated me." She replied, showing him her son, "I was at my post."

As Cornelius's participation in the attempt of Count d'Inisdal was not known to Father O'Collogan, he escaped the reproaches which the worthy Priest would no doubt have poured on him, for not in some way procuring him a share in it—and Bryan, even in his confessions, kept to the last the secret which he had been in a very slight way admitted to, but justly considered as no sin of his, whatever might have been its object. Cornelius had for several months received alarming accounts of his father's health, and he had frequent struggles with himself on the question of flying to his parent, or remaining near the queen. Each letter that he received filled him with anxiety, and no sooner had he read it, than he resolved to set off immediately; but one thought of her—one imagined scene of the dangers which surrounded her—one view of the picture which he wore next his heart, was sufficient to destroy all his filial ardor for the time, and he instantly began to reason with himself on the over anxious view which he took of his father's illness, and to convince himself that it could not be as serious as he feared at first.

But one letter at length arrived, which roused him from this state, and put an end to his self-deceiving sophistries. It was from the Roman Catholic clergyman of the parish in which his father's estate stood, and it gave so alarming an account of this dear parent, that Cornelius was filled with the conviction of the necessity of his presence at home. He gave himself no time for reflection, but wrote hurriedly yet decisively to Father O'Collogan to come to him on the morrow to receive his farewell, and he next proceeded to Paris to entreat, through his friend at the palace, the honor of being admitted to take leave of the queen, having first demanded her permission to absent himself from her service, and stating the urgent nature of the duty that carried him away. It happened that just at this juncture two other of the Garde-du-Corps, who had, with him, bled in the defence of the palace of Versailles, were about to quit Paris by the particular orders of the queen, for their lives had been more than once

endangered, by their resolute defence of her in public parties, where her reputation had been assailed. They acted from the bold impulse of duty, which told them to court all dangers in justification of her honor. Their attachment was not of that deep and speechless kind, which prompts the possessor to his own preservation on common occasions, as his first duty to her whose service may require the sacrifice of his life on some momentous crisis. Marie Antoinette, anxious to give the most positive token of her gratitude to these her gallant defenders, had appointed this very evening of Cornelius's solicited interview, to receive them in the palace in the presence of the king and Madame Elizabeth. It was an opportune occasion for granting the same honor to our hero; and it was arranged that the three brave comrades should make their appearance together.

At eight o'clock that evening, they were punctual to the time appointed, and entering the palace secretly, and one by one, they met together in the apartment of one of the queen's confidential attendants.* This lady having received them graciously, requested them in the queen's name to accept whatever sum they might severally require to enable them to quit Paris. Cornelius's two companions, took each of them a small sum in gold from the open box, which the lady held in her hands, but he refused respectfully, and with gratitude, stating that a remittance had reached him that very morning, which left him ample means of making his journey. Had it not been so, he too would have freely taken from the stock which was, as it should have been, common to the friends of the hapless owner.

In a few minutes the door of the chamber opened, and the king, the queen, and Madame Elizabeth entered. The three guardsmen bowed with profound respect, and our hero felt his heart throb, and his eyes swim, as had been usual with him in former interviews with the queen. She sat down in an arm chair, behind which stood the attendant lady; Madame Elizabeth occupied another close to her; the king walked towards the fire place, and stood with his back resting against the mantel-piece; the three young men stood facing their royal master; for they owned him still as such, powerless as he had become.

The queen looked repeatedly towards the king, as if encouraging him to speak, but finding that his timidity would not allow him to break the silence, which was throwing an awkward air of formality over a scene that was meant to be as familiar as was consistent with her husband's dignity, she spoke as follows:—

"Gentlemen, the king, as well as myself, has wished to see, before your departure, such gallant friends as you have proved yourselves to be to us. We feel, all of us, how much we owe to the courageous attachment which most probably saved our lives. We

* Although no name is mentioned in Cornelius's manuscript, it seems probable that this was Madame Campan. In her Memoirs she mentions a circumstance similar to this interview; but it might not have been the same, as she only specifies two Gardes-du-Corps. Though the account of what passed, being almost verbatim the same as here, it is more likely that this was the scene she describes, and that she forgot the exact number of actors in it.

trust this interview may be as gratifying to you, as it is to us. We deeply feel our obligation to you all."

Her voice faltered a little, when one of Cornelius's companions took advantage of the moment to express in a few well chosen words and a collected manner, the devoted fidelity of himself and his friends, and their proud sense of the honor they then enjoyed.

"My brother," said Madame Elizabeth, "wants language to express himself as you deserve gentlemen, and as he feels,—you perceive his emotion." And, in fact, it was observable; for though he did not speak one word, his eyes were filled with tears, and his lips quivered in his vain attempts at utterance.

The queen was embarrassed at this new proof of the king's tenderness. It was a moment for the bold and manly expression of his thoughts. But his nerves were not able to bear the weight of his feelings; and she spoke again—

"Now, gentlemen, it is necessary that we retire; nor must you be seen here. You know our situation: we must only patiently bear it, and pray to Heaven for the bright day when we may burst from it. This has been a short interview, but it has proved to you what we feel, as well as could have been done by an age of more ceremonious display. Farewell, gentlemen! Be cautious of your own safety,—we may want your aid again. Farewell.

The guards retired. Cornelius would have given worlds for the power of uttering one word, but his thoughts seemed to die away in their passage from his brain to his lips, and as if their energy dissolved through his whole frame, he trembled with the force of his agitation. The king went out of the room followed by Madame Elizabeth; and as Cornelius closed the door by which he and his companions retired, he heard the queen say to the lady, whom she drew towards a recess,—“I am mortified and sorry that I brought him here—so is Elizabeth, I am sure. Had he but said to these brave young men but half what he thinks of them, they would be wild with joy;—but he cannot conquer his fatal shyness.”

“How little,” thought Cornelius “was the expression of his sentiments necessary—for one of us, at least!”

We must pass hurriedly over the leave-taking with Father O'Collogan, as well as the ecstasies of Bryan Mulcahie, at the prospect of once more seeing his “ould mother, the ould castle, and the ould master,” and turning his back as he said, upon “the desatful country, where they cried long life to the king, while they swore they'd be the death of him; and took off their hats and made a low bow to a man, while they put a rope about his neck, and tucked him up to a lamp-iron.”

Cornelius's preparations for departure were soon completed. He took but few things of any kind with him,—the rest he left with the priest; and in a state of disorder which he purposely chose, to prove to himself that his absence was to be a short one. He hastened every movement to the very utmost point of despatch. He gave neither himself nor Bryan time for one regular meal. The post-horses were driven at their greatest speed! and the winds and tides were too slow, even when most favourable, for the rapid progress of his wish-

es. He gave thought no breathing-time ; nor did he venture to look back one instant on the scenes he was quitting. His whole efforts were to keep his mind on the stretch, in picturing what was to come; for he feared that if it once reverted to the idolized object he left behind, his high-wrought resolutions would dissolve before the magic touch of memory. In this war with his own inclinations—sleepless—unrefreshed, and every way wretched, he performed his journey by land, and his short sea voyage, and once more touched his native soil, and wound his way along the road which led to his long-loved home.

CHAPTER XII.

Cornelius had been absent exactly a year, and the powerful changes which that period had effected in the whole constitution of his mind, produced a corresponding appearance in every thing which now met his view. At every step he saw the same desolate wretchedness, for nothing was altered which he had been accustomed to witness from his earliest years ; but the strong contrast formed by the splendid misery he had been so lately in the midst of, gave an air of tenfold loneliness to the landscape around him. His father's house stood in a wild part of the country, where a heart-broken race of peasantry seemed to have caught their tone from the bleak and cheerless aspect of the scenes they lived in. Rude hills, extensive plains, and dreary bogs were bounded by the ocean ; while the old castle, from which the ancestors of our hero had looked defiance on the surrounding tracts, stood forth a solitary illustration of the uncivilized region over which it frowned.

As our hero slowly moved along, followed by Bryan, on horses hired at the town where they landed, he suddenly caught the view of his paternal residence ; and its old round tower, gloomily contrasting with the modern building in which twenty years of his young life had glided away, brought his mind back at once to those remote associations which a few eventful months had for the time almost effaced. Every scene and every sensation of his early days seemed renewed. Actions and thoughts returned upon him in all the vividness of their first existence, and unlike the mere reflection of memory. He inhabited once more the world of his natural feelings ; and his late adventures, and the deep passions which arose from events that looked unreal, now swept before his mind as the phantom pageantry of a vision. Every object which met his view spoke of his boyish days. The mountains, the plains, and the sea, brought home to him the bursts of opening delight which kept pace with his first field sports and ocean excursions. Every tree or riv-

ulet or rock which varied his rugged road, spoke a diction familiar to his fancy, and he appeared to hold converse with a crowd of old imaginings. The dreams of his boyhood came rising into fresh life before him, his energetic grief at his country's degradation, and the wild schemes of redress in which his musings were wont to abound. In the midst of all, the recollection of his father was mingled—in figure, gesture and words—his heart was expanding in the warmth of filial love, and he started and stopped in his reverie, for it seemed to him that his father's form had actually met his eyes. He turned round short, recalled to the observance of his actual situation by this home touch of fancy, and he asked Bryan if he had seen any thing. Poor Bryan found it difficult to reply to the question, for his mind had been undergoing a process somewhat similar to that of his master; but his feelings less acted on by visionary flights, and oppressed with some superstitious sentiment of evil, had been silently dissolving into a flood of tears. When he recovered himself sufficiently to speak plainly, he told Cornelius that "he saw nothing but the *model* of his poor old mother which was continually crossing his path, and he was sure that her *Fetch* if she was living, or her spirit if she was dead, had been every minute at his elbow ever since he mounted the unlucky black baste that his legs were hanging at each side of." This ludicrous avowal of a state of agitation so like his own, acted on Cornelius better than all the reasoning in the world could have done; and putting spurs to his horse he went forward briskly, blushing at the self-knowledge of his weakness.

As he approached the precincts of his home, every thing wore a deserted air. It was but little later than noon, yet the cabins were shut up, the ploughs and other implements of labor lay unemployed in the fields, the cattle wandered at random, and no inhabitants were to be seen. Phantasies of all kinds crossed Cornelius's brain. Fears of some calamity pressed upon him, and he unwillingly found that the most superstitious notions were forcing themselves into his mind. He rode on the faster—as if in search of some explanation, but every one appeared to have purposely fled from his path. At length, emerging from a little grove of oak, which skirted the road at each side, close to the foot of the hill on which the old castle stood, he heard a wild cry come faintly down, which carried to his ears the well known death-wail, and seemed to vibrate through his frame.

"Good God! Bryan, did you hear that?" cried he; "'tis my father."

"No, no, Master Cornelius, there's no fear of him—it was'n't him that swept past us just now on that blast of wind. It isn't you that's an orphan this blessed hour, God help me!"

"What do you mean, Bryan?" said Cornelius, glad to catch at even the chance of denial, which the wild superstition of his companion gave to his fears.

"Don't ask me, Master Cornelius, don't ask me—she's gone—I saw her and heard her—and she seemed to touch me as she passed by. Listen, there's the keening again! the Lord rest her soul!"

And again the wailings were carried towards them by the breeze, louder and more lengthened than before. Cornelius shuddered as

he forced onwards at full gallop, yet clung in the midst of his fears to the hope that it was Bryan and not he who was parentless. In a few minutes more he was in sight of the court-yard, in front of the house, and he saw it thronged with people of both sexes, the female part *keening*, (as it is called) wringing their hands, tearing their hair, and showing every symptom of sorrow which is displayed in that part of the country on the death of a friend or protector.

No room for doubt now existed in Cornelius's mind as to the loss of his parent, yet he distractedly asked of the men who crowded round him as he flung himself off his horse, "where is my dear father—is he indeed gone?"

"Oh, Master Cornelius, is it your honor that's in it?" "Oh, the Lord save you, my jewel, is it to-day you're come back to see this sorrowful sight?" and many such torturing exclamations burst from several lips.

"You distract me," cried our hero; "tell me the truth for heaven's sake, where is my father? Is he, oh, tell me, is he dead?"

"Sure enough he's dead, please your honor, or as good as dead, for Father Keegan is giving him the last service; the Lord be merciful to him, for he was a good master to us!" said one of the weeping men.

Cornelius could listen to no more. He rushed into the house, and proceeded up stairs to the room where he knew his father always slept. At the door he found a crowd of women, howling in doleful chorus; and entering the room he perceived the parish priest devoutly praying at the bed-side, his eyes closed, and the materials used in the last rituals for the dying standing beside him. Two candles were burning on the table close by, and by the feeble light which they emitted, mingling with that partial daylight that fell through the window curtains, he saw the pale, emaciated, and death-like countenance of his father, who lay stretched on the bed, while his own nurse, Bryan's mother, knelt beside, scarcely less ghastly, with dishevelled hair and streaming eyes.

The noise made by Cornelius bursting into the room, and the exclamation which he could not suppress as he saw a deathly expression of his father's face, made the nurse and the priest both start from their places. When the old woman perceived him, she involuntarily ejaculated his name, which was repeated by the priest in a tone of equal astonishment. At the sound of this dear-loved name, the father, on whom the hand of death had been just laid, but not with force enough to crush him, opened his languid eyes, cast a look around the room, recognized his son—and was restored by that glance to the existence which his followers had prematurely supposed extinct. He started up in his bed and though unable to articulate, he opened wide his arms and received the warm and tender embraces of his son, who felt as though he held to his breast a being arisen from the grave.

The effect of this momentary and miraculous scene was immense upon the astonished priest,—but to the feeble frame and superstitious mind of the poor nurse it was fatal. Her dreams of the preceding night, as worn out with watching she dozed by her master's bed, had

all turned on Cornelius and her son; and dangers and death in a thousand shapes, had flitted before her brain, which was prepared for such fancies by the scene of threatened dissolution which lay before her. Presentiments of the worst had afflicted her the whole morning; and as she watched the gradually decreasing light of her master's eyes, and saw the pallid hues of what she thought inevitable death stealing fast over his face, she gave up all hope, and had communicated to the anxious followers watching outside, her belief that all was over. Prone to receive the intelligence of ill, the wild cry sounded the death of the revered sufferer, and the poor nurse thus confirmed in her fears, without being able to distinguish the truth that the one sprung from the other, had bowed her head in the long dreaded certainty. The appearance of Cornelius—his worn out and agitated look—the sudden starting up of his father—and, in short, the whole combination around her produced a shock of violence sufficient to shake a firmer mind and stronger frame; and between grief, terror, and amazement, she sunk senseless on the floor.

The priest called aloud for help, and many of the people without hurried into the chamber. The greater part of these as rapidly retreated, on seeing what they believed the dead body of their master sitting upright in the embraces of Cornelius. A few, more resolute, following the directions of the priest, lifted the expiring nurse and bore her out into the air. Bryan, whose terrified anticipations had convinced him that his mother was dead, had been overjoyed at having his eager enquiries on his arrival answered so favorably as to his parent's state; yet his happiness was deeply dashed with sorrow at the news of his old master's death, which accompanied the glad tidings. He burst into tears, the ready expression of his mingled emotions, and was slowly preparing to mount the stairs, which his young master had so rapidly ascended, muttering prayers for the dead and blessings for the living, when he was met by some of the fast retreating peasants, who, terrified and astonished, were incoherently exclaiming, "He's alive! he's alive! The old master is alive again—or his ghost's come already to take master Cornelius away. He's alive, he's alive yet—or his spirit is there, one or the two."

Next came the body of the nurse, borne by a couple of sturdy peasants, and surrounded by the women.

"What's that you have there wid you?" cried Bryan with straining eyes as he recognized his dying mother.

"Who else would it be but Peggy Mulcahie, your own mother?" replied one of the men.

"What's the matter wid her?" falteringly asked Bryan.

"Nothing but a fright at seeing the master's ghost, or himself still alive—if it's him that's in it."

"She's dead, she's dead," cried Bryan; "let me near her, let me look at her:—she's dead!"

"Och, it's only the fright," cried the surrounding group; all pressing close round the dying woman, and shutting out all chance of her recovery.

"It's no fright—it's death, I tell yiz all it's death that's on her," replied Bryan, in that tone of sorrowful energy which in an Irishman

generally assumes the air of anger—"I knew she was to die—I saw her cross me three times on the road—and I heard her death-ory in the blast—I knew it all, wirishthrew, wirishthrew!"

Bryan's prophetic exclamations carried their accomplishment with them. The listeners, convinced by the tokens which he reported himself to have had, that poor Peggy Mulchahie's fate was out of the reach of cure, gave her up as lost, and did not attempt any of those remedies which in such a case might have saved her. They stooped over her with stifling anxiety—shut out every breath of air—offered not the least relief—and saw the convulsions which terminated her life, without feeling the conviction that they might themselves be considered in a negative degree her murderers.

For several months, after this day of arrival, Cornelius's father lingered on in that state of breathing lassitude which can scarcely be called existence, when a whisper of air might be thought sufficient to snap the fragile thread of life. Cornelius watched by his father's bed with incessant care, and medicined to him those assiduities which smooth the sloping descent to the grave. He gave his whole time to this sacred duty; but his attentions were the mechanical results of affection—for his mind was far away. He saw his father shrink and wither before his eyes, so silently and softly, that the palpable approach of death was not perceived—but the life of the sufferer seemed to fade away like the hues of a drooping flower. There was nothing in this state to rouse the positive energies of our hero's soul; and he appeared to himself as if partaking of that slumbering decay which fell across his father's tone and look, as the shades of evening sank upon the landscape which opened out before him. But his active thoughts were busily employed, fashioning into shapes of wildest fantasy those visions of imagined scenes which floated incessantly before him. She whom he adored was ever in prominent display, the passive inspiration of a world of moving wonders. In the heat of Cornelius's enthusiasm, numberless events were every moment springing into fancied existence, and all had reference to somewhat of her happiness and greatness. In all *he* was the leading actor—all was success and triumph, and delight—and while he thus cheated himself from the dark view of the destiny overhanging her and him, and brought her, as it were, within his mental grasp, the object of his real cares sunk almost unperceived from beneath his gaze, which looked widely into the futurity of an imagination that was more powerful than fact. When the event took place, and the last glimmering of life expired, and left him fatherless, he could scarcely believe the evidence of sense; for death, as he had heretofore seen it, had been the result of violence, and accompanied by fierce struggling. He looked long on the breathless form that seemed quietly to sleep before him, watching with intense incertitude for the signs which were to announce the spirit's flight from earth. We must not dwell on his anguish, when doubt was hushed by the livid tracks of death, as the tyrant set his stamp upon the mass of mortal clay; nor can we follow to the grave the sad procession, whose lamentations rung through the groves and valleys in a thousand echoes.

During the interval between Cornelius's arrival at home, and his

parent's death, Father O'Colloghan kept up a constant correspondence, narrating in his own peculiar way the events that were but imperfectly detailed in the public papers. The gloomy tone of the priest's communications had no ill effect on the enthusiastic hopes of his young friend, who considered the beauty, the courage, and the virtue of Marie Antoinette, a talismanic combination sufficient to render powerless the worst efforts of fate. Impressed with this deep-planted notion, he had no fears for her safety ; but when his father's death dissolved the only tie which kept him from her service, he determined to return to it with a sole and effectual devotion. To attain this great object, he formed the resolution of selling every part of his small property in Ireland, with the exception of the venerated mansion where he and his ancestors had been born, and that gloomy spot in the lone burial-ground, where his father's body had been just laid to moulder with the ashes of his race. This proceeding was not one of immediate or easy completion. The forms of law required long delays, and the proceedings of lawyers did not shorten them. Purchasers enough were to be found, and competition ran high among those greedy sharks who fatten on the sacrifices of the imprudent, the generous, and the unfortunate. Cornelius's property therefore sold well ; and he remitted the whole amount of its produce to France, determined to embark his fortune with his life in the glorious hazard of giving freedom to the idol of his earthly worship. He weighed well the dangers he was about to encounter, not for his own sake, but for that of others, and he was resolved that none of those to whom he was so dear, and whom he was on the point of abandoning, perhaps, for ever, should have cause even to suspect his purpose ; for he knew that the shock of an event which is irrevocable, produces much less misery than the preparatory pangs of anticipation. The sale was, therefore, secretly effected, and the faithful band of tenants and followers who watched him from his cradle as their own and his house's hope, were passively transferred to the protection and service of new and unhonored masters. This proceeding affected Cornelius's feelings, but did not move his resolution. It rather added firmness to his mind, which thus shook off the strongest of all shackles, in freeing itself from the associations of old habits and early friends.

Cornelius saw the day arrive which was to separate him from his home, with the desperate intensity of resolution that wants but the echo of some old remembered thought to shake it into air. But he had wound his mind up to a pitch beyond the reach of recollections. Every feeling was concentrated and fixed, and he looked onwards towards his purpose with that unflinching exertion of the will which is the leading faculty of every resolute mind. Under pretence of a hurried journey for the arrangements of some affairs, he despatched a small packet of clothes and necessaries, by the speediest conveyance, to one of those provincial southern ports, from whence he had ascertained the sailing, on a certain day, of a vessel for France.

He mounted his horse and parted from Bryan, who held his stirrup unconscious of his purpose, with a sudden pang, that came nearer than any he had previously felt to the sensation which alone could

decompose his projects. He clapped spurs to his horse, and only stopped him at the entrance of the desolate burying-ground, where he had still one spot of earth to call his own. He alighted, and tying his horse to a gate, which swung back on its creaking hinges as he touched it, he stepped across the rudely formed graves, waded through the weeds and long grass which were matted together in the intervals between the mounds, and unheedingly trod upon many of the flowers, and white paper garlands planted by the sorrowing rustics, who were thus doomed on their next visit to the solemn spot, to many a superstitious pang at finding their simple offering cast down and withered, by a touch which they, no doubt, deemed unearthly. Cornelius reached the little antique monument, which had been erected centuries before, and which was consecrated in his mind by all the natural feelings of family pride and love. There he knelt for a while; and invoking the shade of his late lost father, and letting his mind glance back one instant across ages of material facts, he seemed mixt in momentary communion with the shades of his ancient race, and swore, with uplifted hands and eyes, that he would perform some action worthy of their name and his. That short moment of unreal existence past, he returned into his actual self; and, with his every thought bent forward to his one great purpose, he hurried on his journey, and arrived in Paris, full of the swelling energy which leads to daring enterprise, to glory or destruction.

CHAPTER XIII.

"All then, the blessing of Heaven be about you, for ever and ever, my darling boy! Then you're come back to me once more! Murther alive, but your looking pale and thin! what has passed over you? And your eyes! By the powers they seem darting and burning in through me! And you're come! And you're poor dear father, he's gone! The Lord receive him, and the Virgin, and St. Patrick, and all the army of martyrs—for bad luck to the other that ever deserved to be with them better nor he. Oh, Cornalius, Cornalius, my darling, but I'm glad to clap my eyes on you again! but sorrow's the bit I can see of you now—for you're swimming and dancing in the big drops that's rising up between you and me. Sould all your fortune!—and kept the castle—and the monumint—and the grave in the ould burial ground!—and sent all the heaps of money over to Paaris in a letter! why then think o'that! O murther, and it's yourself that's to the fore after all!"

Such was the greeting of Father O'Collogan, and his running commentary on his friend's appearance and conduct, when he received him into his open arms, at the office of the coach which carried him to Versailles. Cornelius replied by a cordial embrace; and

he begged the priest to inform him truly of those particulars of the queen's situation which he had only learned as he passed through Paris. But this was not consistent with his companion's plan of conversational tact. He had a roundabout way of coming to any point, and my readers know already that Ireland lay constantly in his road. On the present occasion, the recent arrival of Cornelius from that dear loved spot of so many recollections seemed to draw the good priest's feelings to it by a closer tie—and he could not resist the overflowings of his heart, which swept away for a time every thought connected with other topics. To Cornelius' anxious inquiries he replied, "Oh, botheration! my boy, don't be after talking to me about kings and queens and royal families—I can think of nothing at all, at all, but yourself and my darling country,—just for all the world like Ovid,—

*Nescio qua natale solum dulcedine cunctos
Ducit et immemores non sinist esse sui.*

I know not how it is, not I.
That Ireland's always in my eye—
But somehow ever it my fate is
To think of bog and frog and grog,
Strong arms, warm hearts,
And maily praties!

"Oh, thunder and fire, my jewel, let us talk about old Erin! how is she getting on?—may be she's better—she can't be worse,—and you were *there* the other day—Think o'that! why the very smell of the turfs on the soles of your shoes! and you've sowed all, and quit her forever! but you'll go back to be buried any how, or you wouldn't have kept the monumint. Oh, my poor country! that's the way every thing good forsakes you—and the devil a bad thing can live in it, barring its Engleified traitors,—not as much as a snake. *Nullus hic anguis, nec venratum quicquam*, says ould Camden, no thanks to him for the same, the Sassanach!

Nothing venomous lives in the land, by the mass,
And 'tis there that you'll ne'er find a snake in the grass

But she breeds plenty of human vipers to sting the mother that bore them, God knows! and Bede, what does the venerable Bede say?

"Nullus ibi serpens vivere valet—"

Let a serpent smell the soil—no more—
And he'll die without even touching the shore.

I wonder how the devil Strongbow and King William and the likes of them, got landed, bad luck to them! but there's no use in talking—a day will come!"

And with this prophecy, fiercely announced, Father O'Colloghan relapsed into the state of angry meditation which the mention of Ireland and the memory of her wrongs were always sure to create;

so certainly indeed, that one might have supposed he only indulged in the subject for the sake of putting himself into a passion.

Cornelius, who knew his ways, contrived to soothe him by degrees, and soon softened the asperities of his temper and brought fresh tears into his eyes, by some touching details of his father's remembrance of him; by a mention of poor Bryan's loss and subsequent grief; and finally by the aid of that very bottle of native whiskey, of which I partook, as the reader may remember, some twenty years later, on the day of my first meeting with the worthy priest.

Our hero soon made himself master of every subject of information connected with the queen, and very speedily made known to her through the former channel of his communications, that he had returned with life and fortune dedicated to her use. We must not stop to trace the many trials which put his fidelity to the proof, nor the various frustrated plans for relief to the royal sufferers, in which Cornelius was an actor. No want of money being experienced by them, his funds remained untouched and secure, and he lived with the greatest frugality; holding his property as a sacred trust, for some urgent circumstances of want, which he now began to foresee hung over the king and queen.

When he arrived this second time in France, the year 1791 was far advanced, and many of those hurrying events had taken place which brought the royal family so quickly down the rapid gradations of their ruin—the first Federation of July 1790, when half a million of spectators ran riot in the confusion of what they called loyalty and patriotism, but which was, in fact, but the remains of servile adoration to the name of "King," mixed with an ignorant enthusiasm for that of "Country,"—the revolt of the guards in the spring following, when Louis was stopped on his attempted departure for Saint Cloud, and his extensive prison, of all France, changed for the limited confinement of the Tuileries—the flight to Varennes, in June 1791, the arrest of the King, and its consequent effects, of utter alienation on the people and total despair upon the queen; when, finding all the efforts of her courage futile, she gave herself up for awhile as abandoned by heaven as well as man, and her beautiful profusion of golden hair was in one day turned to silver white, by the touch of grief, which snatched the transmuting wand from the loosened grasp of time:—and finally, among these epochs of misfortune, came, in September, 1791, the acceptance of the constitution by the king and the legislative assembly—which instead of a splendid union of power with liberty, was merely the mockery of a junction, which fore ran the degradation of the one and the consequent abuse of the other.

The last of these events was hailed (as was usual with every act which assembled the multitude and gratified their vain-gloriousness) with acclamation, rejoicing, and the treacherous semblance of happiness. But it plunged the actors of conceded royalty into deep sorrow. It dispersed the calenture which had so long deceived the monarch, and he saw in reality the booming waves of ruin where he had before imagined the vegetation of rational change.

The various events thus hastily sketched, were the grand acts of the

political drama which was obvious to the whole world; but it must be left to the imagination to figure the hours of bitter agony endured by the unhappy personages who filled the parts of chief victims in the tragedy. Independently of the positive misery inflicted on the royal family, every evil that cruelty could heap on pride was accumulated to crush the spirit of the queen. She seemed to bear "a charmed life" against the attempts of her ferocious enemies—and their only chance of ridding themselves of her gallant opposition to their process of royal degradation, was to bow her down in the depths of humiliation. During the period of our hero's absence from France, two avowed assassins were detected in designs against her life. One was executed, contrary to her wish, and the other suffered to escape through her intervention. Various attempts to poison her were frustrated by her faithful servants—but although she went constantly into public and rejected all persuasion to wear armor, (such as the king put on at the celebration of the anniversary of the Federation) there was a something of protection in her own high bearing, that, as on the sixth of October at Versailles, must have paralyzed the many arms that seemed nerved to do her harm. Indignities too gross for record here were heaped on her with unflinching brutality. Nothing, in short, was left undone, even in her most domestic hours, that could be wounding to a woman of a proud and delicate mind, and indicative of moral turpitude and grossness on the part of her persecutors.

Such was the effect of these private atrocities upon the leaders of the revolution, which had already proved that a nation may buy even freedom at too high a price, that almost all who had capacity sufficient to distinguish its just boundaries, turned with remorse and pity towards the victims of their miscalculating enthusiasm.

The king, his conduct and opinions, were universally overlooked, but every mind was bent upon his unfortunate consort. Mirabeau, La Fayette, Dumourier and Barnave, were one and all impressed with the desire to save the monarchy and serve the queen. But they had destroyed their own power and could not acquire her confidence. One of her weaknesses was the deep disdain which confounded all the revolutionists together, and marked them all as objects of hatred and distrust. She listened to their proposals, but she rejected their advice, and doubted their sincerity—and thus threw away successively a hundred chances of relief.

During all these struggles of wretchedness the queen's mind was in a state of utter misery—but her temper was never ruffled, her courage not once cast down, nor her bodily health impaired. When one of her attendants, on an occasion of serious mental agitation, requested her to take some antispasmodic drops, she made that reply which must have arisen from deep feeling and deeper grief—"It is women who are *happy* whose nerves are subject to disease;" but still the workings of her mind wrought a change in her appearance as striking as that produced by ill health. The grief which whitened her hair did not leave her countenance untouched. Her features displayed its stamp: she grew thin; and her eyes, so perpetually overflowing with salt tears, became swollen and red.

Cornelius had been two or three days in Paris, vainly endeavoring

to procure a sight of the queen, and was suffering intense anxiety in his disappointment, when an evening was fixed for the public appearance of the royal family at the Italian Opera. They had already appeared, since the acceptance of the Constitution, at the Theatre Francois and the French Opera, and were remarkably well received. It was therefore determined that they should frequently show themselves to the people, and high hopes were entertained that the public mind might settle down into a state of rational loyalty.

Cornelius was one of the first who took his station in the pit of the Italian Opera on the night in question. The house was soon filled; and, punctual to the appointed hour, the king, the queen, and the princess Elizabeth with their attendants entered their box. Their reception was good, notwithstanding that many emigrations had greatly reduced the number of the nobility, and that the theatre was filled with an audience not composed of what was formerly considered the higher ranks. But a strong feeling existed just then in favor of the royal party in the better classes of the people, for the struggle between *them* and the vilest, which ended in the triumph of the latter, had not yet taken place.

Cornelius gazed for a long time on the only object which was visible for *him*, unconscious of the applauding shouts which hailed her appearance; and it was not till the performance was far advanced, that he regained the composure, necessary for a just understanding of what was going forward. The opera was proceeding tranquilly, and was nearly finished, when one of the singers laid an unfortunate emphasis upon a line which contained the phrase "oh how I love my mistress," and accompanying the expression by a gesture of profound respect, turned towards the queen's box. No sooner was the sound uttered than it became the signal for a desperate change in the unanimous tranquillity which reigned in the theatre. Many of the audience understood Italian, which was the language of the performance; while translations of the piece, printed with the original and scattered through the house, put almost every one in possession of the sense of what was uttered. No sooner was the word *Mistress* pronounced than several persons started up in the pit, by a simultaneous, and it might have been supposed concerted movement and exclaimed with violence, "No Mistress!" "No Master!" "Liberty!" "Liberty!" These cries were instantly answered from the boxes by loud shouts of "*Vive le Roi!*" "*Vive la Reine!*" "*Vive a jamais la Reine!*" The uproar was at its height, the performance stopped; every one in the theatre rose except she who was the unintentional cause of the tumult, and she sat with a calm and dignified look while all around her trembled with agitation or fear.

Cornelius had been hitherto passive, feeling, but not acting in the scene, when a man beside him in the pit made himself particularly conspicuous by his shouts of "Liberty!" "No Mistress!" which he uttered with a menacing gesture directed against the queen. Our hero's blood mounted high—he could no longer restrain himself—but raising his arm he felled the insulter to the ground. This was the first blow struck, but the contest immediately became general and fierce. The great majority of the pit were opposed to the queen's

party, but several of these jumped down from the boxes, and they made up in courage their deficiency in number.

Cornelius easily defended himself against the ill directed attacks of his infuriated assailants; and while those who came to his rescue struggled with their opponents in the French style of riot, scratching their faces, kicking their legs, and tearing the unpowdered locks of the Jacobins, which flew with the royalist curls profusely through the air, our hero pursued with persevering vengeance the man who had first roused his indignation into action. He seized him by the throat with one hand, and dealt with the other repeated blows, which his victim used no manly effort to avoid; but he screamed hoarsely for mercy, and to Cornelius's great astonishment addressed him by his name. Our hero ceased his assaults upon this directly personal appeal, and could scarcely credit his senses when his beaten foe whispered him that he was his former associate Armand.

A few hurried words of recognition passed between them, and Cornelius in his amazement agreed to follow Armand from the Theatre; for the king and queen had retired during this alarming scene, and our hero was doubly anxious to see after her safety without the house, and to learn somewhat of the career of the altered and degraded being whom he accompanied. They made their way through the combatants, and as they entered the street they saw the royal carriages moving off at a quick pace, escorted by the national guards, and obstructed by the mob, who had not yet heard the particulars of what had passed within.

As Cornelius stared at his companion he could scarcely reconcile himself to the belief that he saw before him the once gay, flashy, well-dressed aristocrat, whose lace and ruffles and perfumery had made him conspicuous among the vain and haughty courtiers of Versailles. He was now pale and haggard; his black hair hanging undressed upon his shoulders, his clothes of vulgar pattern and fashion, and his whole person neglected and even dirty. Armand read our hero's thoughts; and as they stopped under a feebly lighted gateway, he abruptly said "I know what passes in your mind, Cornelius, but you must not think of me; your own safety and the service of the unhappy queen call loudly for a prompt attention to yourself. You see me changed—every way but in one respect; I am still,—can you believe me? still deeply attached to my former benefactress. Do not reply to me by reproach or remark, but know that though publicly her foe, I labor night and day to serve—or rather to save her."

"What then are you, unhappy man, under this altered garb?" asked Cornelius.

"Alas, I know not what!"—answered Armand with a deep sigh; but recovering his assumed air of probity he quickly added—"No, I am of no actual station—I am but a *patriot*, I sacrifice and suffer all things for my country's good; but no matter, think not of me—your life hangs on a hair. Your conduct in the theatre has sealed your fate if you are discovered. Thank God, your blows fell upon me; but still without instant measures of safety you are lost. Your only chance is in trusting yourself to me."

Cornelius was struck with the force and truth of these observa-

tions. He reflected a moment on the hazard to which he was exposed, and he determined to avail himself of the proffered aid of Armand.

"Will you give yourself up to me for this one night?" asked the latter earnestly—"You have the choice between safety and destruction. Decide, will you?"

"I will—I do," answered Cornelius with firmness.

"You shall have no cause to repent," exclaimed Armand—"Follow me and do in all things as I do. You must be initiated into the ranks of the patriots—you must be one of us in seeming—your safety and her's depend on your conduct—think and act afterwards as you will."

"I shall not flinch from any trial," cried Cornelius—"embarked in the adventure, I will go through with it."

"Enough," said Armand, "you are saved.—Now for the meeting of the Illuminati!"

At the sound of this name Cornelius started and shrunk back. He had heard of their horrid orgies, and knew their desperate designs.

"You hesitate?" said Armand—"you need not fear, for I have gone through it all."

"Fear," cried Cornelius contemptuously—"lead on."

Armand took him by the arm, and they stepped quickly and silently on through the crowded streets, crossed the Place Louis XV and the bridge, and soon gained the banks of the river.

CHAPTER XIV.

As they moved onwards, following the course of the Seine, along its southern side, the hum of the city gradually died away. They left the Hotel of the Invalids behind them towards the left, and passed parallel to the military school, and the *Champ de Mars*, where the *Pont de Jena* now stands, and opposite to the since projected site of the palace of the king of Rome. The night was dark, and the river was visible below them only by the light of the lamps which lined its banks, reflected deep into its bosom, and seeming a regular colonnade of brilliant pillars rising from the bottom of the stream. Cornelius was silent, for his mind was filled with thought, and he saw the necessity of clear consideration and resolute reflection. Armand talked fluently, and detailed to his companion much of his republican career, which the latter listened to with great interest, as a basis for the regulation of his own conduct in what was to come.

They reached at length the *Plaine de Grenelle*, and traversing its dreary paths, they arrived in about an hour under the ledge of wooded

hills which stretch from Meudon to the heights of St. Cloud, from which they are separated by the ravine that forms the road to Versailles. The moon rose fully, and shone upon the landscape, which is, in that point of view, the most beautiful in the environs of Paris. The Chateau of Bellevue, at that time inhabited by the king's counts, but since demolished, stood on the top of the eminence, and a little lower down were the thickly planted grounds of the hill called *La Butte Coaslin*, which had been laid out at great cost, by one of the mistresses of Louis XV. from whom the place takes its name. The white walls of the villa were seen through the spaces of the plantation, shining in the reflection of the moon beams, and the cottage below peeped out from the young trees and shrubs, in the spreading foliage of which it seems, at the present day, to hide from the summer heats and the gaze of the admiring traveller. The wooden bridge, then old and crumbling, stretched across the river, an object far more picturesque than the splendid construction whose arches span it now; and above rose the thick wood of St. Cloud which spreads far along the Seine, and down to the banks that bound its winding course.

Cornelius stopped for awhile in the narrow path, on the brow of the hill, along which his companion led the way; and while he contemplated the calm beauty of the scene, and felt as if his whole thoughts could smoothly float on the silver-surfaced stream, he was roused by Armand, who stopped short, and said aloud—

"Now, citizen, we are arrived; in the name of liberty advance and enter."

Cornelius started at the summons, but recollected instantly the purpose he had in mind, and with an unhesitating step he followed close upon his guide. They entered a cavity in the earth, almost wholly concealed by branching shrubs, and Armand having whispered some watchword, a man dressed in black received them in silence, and motioned them to pass on. The passage was narrow and winding, dimly lighted at intervals by melancholy lamps, which shone on the dark walls, and showed occasionally grim ornaments of skulls and bones. They penetrated far into one of those excavations which are formed all along the face of the hill, and which were originally intended for wine vaults, and most of them used as such. In the depth of one of these recesses, the society of the Illuminati held their secret meetings. Every thing which could impose on the minds of the weak, or rouse the imagination of the enthusiastic proselyte, was studied in the decorations of the cavern council chamber and its approaches. Dim lights, black hangings, scattered instruments of death, and mementoes of mortality were displayed in scanty and solemn arrangement. Armand led on followed by Cornelius, who felt no sentiment but contempt for the imposing mumery; but at length when they reached an opening space, which Armand announced as the antichamber of the council-room, our hero started with horror, and felt his blood run chill as he observed three or four naked corpses lying on the floor, in the breast of each of which a dagger was stuck, while from each a stream of blood ran trickling.

Armand saw his emotion, and smiled. He felt a species of triumph in the momentary expression of alarm, which Cornelius's face dis-

played. But the latter construed his smile in a different sense. He thought he saw in it the rejoicing treachery of a murderous intention. He shrank back, and turned his head round with the view of flying from the place, when he observed two men dressed in black, with naked swords in their hands, who had followed silently and made retreat impossible. They said, with an encouraging expression of countenance, "fear nothing, citizen; this is but a preparation for the test of your courage and virtue."

"Do not hesitate, nor doubt me," whispered Armand: "be firm, or you are lost."

With these words he knocked at a door before them, and on his replying still in whispers to some questions from within, it opened; and he and Cornelius once admitted, it closed again, with a sudden sound, that was like the echoing sentence of eternal imprisonment.

Three men of fierce aspect sat at a table; their looks glanced wildly through their raven locks, and seemed to tell a story of ferocious thoughts and deeds. The chamber was, like the approaches to it, faintly lighted and sadly adorned. A book lay on the table, with writing materials. Three or four daggers were its only furniture, and their blades steeped in blood.

A few rapid questions were proposed to Armand, as to the name, age and quality of the friend whom he thus introduced for admission to the society. These answered, and entered in the register, which lay on the table, Cornelius was asked if he was ready to give his first proof of his patriotism, his devotion to the cause of freedom, and his hatred of its foes. He answered in the affirmative; and then it was demanded of Armand whether he was willing to set the example to his friend of the deed which he would be called upon to perform. Armand replied that he was; and on the word, a curtain was drawn, which disclosed a cave still darker than the other, from the undistinguishable depths of which low groans were heard to proceed. They became gradually louder; and finally a blood-stained couch was brought forward by two men, and on which lay bound another, writhing in apparent agony.

"Take that dagger, brother," said the president in a hollow, yet fierce tone. "Take the dagger, and strike the Aristocrat to the heart."

Armand seized the weapon, and advanced towards the couch. The man who lay on it, and who seemed suffering under the infliction of torture, no sooner saw the uplifted weapon, than he uttered a shriek, which seemed to pierce Cornelius's heart, and screamed aloud for a mercy!

"No mercy for the Aristocrat—no hope for the Royalist," cried Armand; "blood, blood, in the name of our country and our revenge!" and with the last word he struck the dagger full against the supplicant's breast. A stream of blood followed the weapon as he drew it back—a deeper groan issued from the body, and both the executioner and the victim were instantly concealed by the black curtain, which fell between them and the witness of the deed.

Cornelius stood shocked with astonishment and horror. A few minutes of dreadful silence passed over, when the curtain was

slowly raised, and the mute attendants carried forth a dead body, the poignard fast in its bleeding bosom. They passed the door, and Cornelius's heart sunk as he heard the dead weight of the corpse fall on the earthen floor.

The couch was again brought forward, and on it lay another man, apparently more exhausted or more firm than the first, for he only heaved heavy sighs, and but half turned his pallid face and scarce open eyes, with indifference or insensibility on the scene.

"Now, citizen, take that dagger and rid the country of one enemy more, establishing your right to her gratitude, and our confidence. Take up the dagger," cried the president.

Cornelius in the abstraction of terror seized the weapon—advanced as it were instinctively towards the couch—raised his arm while his brain reeled—but started in instantaneous recollection of the scene before him, and of the deed he was about to commit. The dagger was falling from his hand, when the prostrate man called to him in a smothered whisper, inaudible or unnoticed by the person at the table, and the mute attendants, "strike fearlessly, Cornelius—it is I, Armand—there is no reality in your blow; I wear a corselet, and your dagger's blade runs up into its own hilt,—strike!"

A quick conviction flashed across Cornelius's mind. He saw that all was a hideous trick to try the nerves of the proselytes. He struck at the bosom of his pretended victim. The groan issued and the blood flowed from the spring-dagger's handle—and the curtain fell between him and the council chamber.

Armand sprang upon his feet, hastily threw on his clothes, and was with our hero hurried by the mutes into another room, where brilliant lights showed a party of upwards of a hundred young men, carousing, eating, drinking, and enjoying themselves, in strange contrast to the frightful ordeal through which the uninitiated were made to pass. This mockery of blood and horror was used as Cornelius had surmised, to prove the courage and desperation of those who wished for admittance. Those who had gone through the trial acted the part of the sacrificed Aristocrats. Dead bodies were procured from the hospitals and burying grounds, and danger to the actors avoided by spring daggers, and concealed breast-plates, while bladders containing blood were made to burst by the harmless blows.

After these initiatory horrors, which many of the highly excited youths would, in that hey-day of republican frenzy, have gloried in had they been real, the newly admitted member was all at once introduced into the scene of festive enjoyment before described.—Beyond that there was nothing terrible. An oath of patriotism and secrecy, a signal communicated, and a certain sum deposited to aid the general fund,—all the ceremonies of installation were completed.

Cornelius went through all, and retired with Armand, who excused his not having communicated the unreal nature of the ceremonies to his companion on the plea of his oath of secrecy. Cornelius admitted the excuse; and before morning he reached Paris, bearing a certificate of his civism, and consequent safety, and his head still troubled with bewildering doubts of the truth of what had passed.

From this night in which he was nominally enrolled in the list of

the Jacobins, and admitted into the fellowship of their most celebrated sect, our hero became, to all appearance, one of the most furious of that faction. Introduced by Armand into the clubs, and other assemblies of the patriots, he was considered a zealous convert to their cause. He joined the national guard, and was appointed to a command in one of the sections of the city. In these capacities he had frequent opportunities of serving the queen, and the indulgence of an occasional admission to her presence, which he could not otherwise have obtained. He often stood for hours of duty, firmly yet temperately protecting her in her own palace from the insults of his rabble associates. He many a time volunteered the duty of guard upon her, and in the capacity of officer he procured her frequent interviews with the king, in the dark and secret corridor behind her apartments; and more than once it fell to his lot to watch at the open door of her bed-room for a whole night, pursuant to the brutal orders given him, and to alleviate the indignities she was exposed to, by his delicate respect, and his ardent assurances of support and assistance.

The dreary winter of 1791 thus passed over, and the hopes of the royalists sank every day lower. Scenes of the most affecting nature continually took place between the king and queen. He showed a wonderful mixture of occasional courage with habitual weakness, at times rising to a great degree of energy and spirit, and once sinking so low as to remain ten whole days without uttering a single word. The people hurried on the frantic course in which they were piloted by a few all-powerful villains; and the only wonder appears to be the long delays which retarded the consummation of their criminal career.

The formation of the military and the civil household of the king accumulated the emigrations to such an extent, that he was almost wholly bereft of his friends, but few having courage to outstay a measure which did not leave him a single member of the nobility in his service. He felt this deeply; but the queen looked on her growing distresses with a complacency and a courage that seemed more than human. She still attended assiduously to the care of her children, and never neglected the duties of her religion. In one of its material offices she was mainly assisted by the intervention of Cornélius, and the aid of his friend, our worthy priest; for the latter was the clergyman, who clandestinely introduced into the palace chapel by our hero on Easter morning long before the dawn appeared, officiated in the holy mysteries which she that day devoutly joined in.

The 20th of June came on—that great forerunner of the more decisive 10th of August. On the former of these days, when the sections of Paris, headed by Santerre, defiled through the halls of the palace, and for hours held their royal prisoners in a state of torturing uncertainty worse than actual death, our hero was among the ranks of the national guard; and, true to his object, the service of the queen, he stood close by her side in the council chamber, beyond which she could not penetrate in her efforts to get near the king. Her distress at being thus separated from him in his danger was ex-

cessive ; and, at the very moment when he was displaying an unwonted share of courage, and putting the soldier's hand upon his breast to prove that it beat calmly, she, upon hearing that Madame Elizabeth had personated her when the rabble called for her, and was then with the king, exclaimed, "My sister with him! She, then, serves for the rampart which my body should form! Let me, too, join him, and, if necessary, die in his defence!"

But the rush of the crowd prevented all approach, and she sat down beside a table, on which she held the Dauphin sitting before her; while his sister occupied a chair close to her royal mother.

Cornelius at this moment presented her with a tri-colored cockade, in the double view of furthering her safety by making her bear the badge of patriotism, and of displaying to the fierce horde around him his assumed republicanism. She placed the cockade upon her head; and the Dauphin, like his father, in another chamber, wore on his the greasy *bonnet rouge* of a votary of the bloody freedom which it was meant to symbolize. To these compliances with the popular feeling of the lives of the royal party were probably owing, on that occasion.

From this day hope lay dead; and the 10th of August came on, to make, as it were, its very memory extinct. It is needless to dwell on the heart-rending scenes of that dreadful day. All that can be imagined of the mental sufferings of her whose feelings it is my more particular object to depict, must fall short of their reality; and, as to him, the hero of my tale, enough has been said to let the reader judge of the terrible violence of his emotion, in a crisis which must have driven it to its greater possible excess. The accustomed fatality awaited this day on every measure taken by the king, when opposed to the queen's courage and acute perception of events. Had the royal family remained in the palace of the Tuilleries, there is but little doubt but it would have resisted the attack; for many of the national guards, and most of the sections, were disposed to defend the king. When the morning dawned, after a night of terrible preparation, the king, the queen, and Madame Elizabeth went down into the court-yard, to revive, by their presence, the drooping loyalty of the majority of the national guards. It was there the heroic Marie Antoinette displayed the daring energy of her mind, in bravely haranguing the faltering troops, and urging them to their duty. Cornelius was in the ranks, and he abetted her efforts to the last, shouting *Vive le Roi et la Reine*, until the feint echoes of the voices which repeated his cry were lost in the mournful silence preserved by the greater number of the troops. The preparation for the attack proceeded rapidly, when the tardy deputation from the National Assembly, inviting the king to take refuge with his family in their protection, was received by the queen with the memorable expression, "I would sooner be nailed to these walls!" But the strong representations of Rœderer, the messenger from the Assembly, and the inclination of the king, prevailed over her repugnance, and she consented to the proposal. The royal family accordingly took their way across the gardens to the Hall of the Assembly: the palace was attacked, and desolation and carnage covered with their black and bloody wings the fall of the French monarchy.

From that period till the judicial murder of the king, Cornelius lived in a state of continued agitation and suffering. He never saw the queen, finding all his efforts vain to gain admittance to the Temple where she was confined, without incurring suspicion, the consequence of which, in those times, was almost certain death. He was, however, indefatigable in efforts to serve her cause in every possible way. He assumed an exaggerated air of Jacobinism in his deportment and opinions, by which he gained a considerable share of influence, in his section, and he was thus enabled, in concert with others of the king's friends, to bring about many alleviations to the deplorable state of him and his hapless family. He entered into a strict intercourse and correspondence with all those likely to give a hope of relief, either externally or in France, and he thus aided, at a thousand risks, to foster in himself and others false hopes, which added tenfold to the shock of the calamitous result.

Cornelius had an additional source of anxiety in Father O'Collogan, who was forced to quit Versailles from the violence of the persecutions to which all the clergy were subjected, and took refuge in disguise under the very roof of Cornelius's lodging. Many privations on the part of the priest, and stratagems on his friend's, were necessary to elude the vigilant eye of the jacobin police; but by a rigid attention to Cornelius's suggestions and by the good luck which leads some men with safety through perils which threaten inevitable ruin, Father O'Collogan escaped unharmed through the "Reign of Terror."

The king was at length removed from his prison to the scaffold, having displayed through lingering months a wonderful continuance of passive courage, resignation, benevolence, and dignified humility. His widowed queen had her cup of misery full; but her brutal tyrants found the means to make it overflow. Terror for her children's safety was every hour on the stretch, racking her heart with the anguish of anticipated ill; and the saint-like devotedness of her fellow-sufferer and more than sister, Madame Elizabeth, added new pangs on her account. Every thought was now turned on flight, and every energy of mind was called into action on the part of those who wished to snatch the sufferers from their impending fate. Numerous plans were formed but abandoned from various obstacles which made them evidently impracticable. Only one wore the promise of success, and in that one our hero was a chief actor.

CHAPTER XV.

Cornelius at length succeeded in getting himself appointed one of the municipal officers, whose duty it was to guard the royal prisoners. For some months after the king's death, he occupied this post with great caution; and, by well-feigned zeal in the discharge of its duties, he completely avoided all suspicion of his devotion to her over whom he was expected to tyrannise. He sounded deeply, but prudently, the hearts of his fellow officers; and, after long consideration of their respective characters and conduct, he found that he could safely trust two of them with the design he had in view. He accordingly, by gradual means, prepared those men, Teulan and Lepitre, for the confidence he reposed in them; and having communicated every thing to the queen, he found it essential that he should yield up the chequered happiness of seeing her, and pouring into her grateful ear his vows of deep respect and energetic loyalty. It was necessary for the external preparations for escape, that he should, for some time preceding the attempt, abandon his right of guard; and he accordingly made it over to his two associates, devoting himself entirely to the hazardous duties without. The Chevalier de Jarjaye, a lieutenant general in the king's service, and who had been frequently employed by him in missions of great delicacy and importance, was chosen by the queen as the chief co-operator in the projected attempt. The plan was laid before him, approved of, and entered into with the promptness and activity which ensure success in most enterprises where Fate stands aghast. Normandy was fixed on as the point of escape, from the facility afforded by its coast for embarkation for England. A ship was hired to be in readiness in one of its ports, and measures taken to secure relays of horses all along the road. Considerable expenses were incurred; but funds were not wanting, and our hero's contribution was not a small one. The details of the plan were as follows:—

The Queen and Madame Elizabeth, were to have been dressed in men's clothes, which were brought secretly into the Temple by the two associate commissaries. The royal sisters were to have been then decorated with tri-colored scarfs, and furnished with tickets such as were borne by the municipal officers. The young king and his sister were to have been disguised in dresses similar to those of the children of the man who every day assisted to clean and arrange the lamps, and who always left the Temple before seven o'clock in the evening. On the evening destined for the attempt, after this man had retired, and the sentinels who had seen him go out were relieved on their posts, Cornelius was to have entered the tower, disguised like him, and furnished with a ticket for admittance, such as was used by all the workmen employed in the Temple. He was to have proceeded to the queen's apartment, his tin box on his arm, and to have taken the children from the hands of Teulan who was to have scolded him severely, for not having come himself sooner to arrange the lamps. The princesses were then to accompany

Toulan in quitting the tower, in their uniforms, and it was trusted that they might succeed in the hazardous attempt.

Passports under feigned names having been regularly procured through the influence of Cornelius, but little fear of pursuit was entertained, until they should have at least the start of it by five or six hours. Three cabriolets were ready provided for the journey. The queen, the young king, and the Chevalier de Jarjayes, were to have occupied the first; Madame, with Lepitre, the second; Madame Elizabeth and Toulan, the third. Cornelius, and a staunch friend of the chevalier's, were to have ridden as postilions to two of the cabriolets; and the third was to have been guided by Father O'Collogan under a similar disguise, for his early pursuits in life, as well as his military career, had made him an active and expert horseman.

Every preliminary being thus ready—the cabriolets in attendance—the different agents in the enterprise disguised in their various costumes, and the resolution of all wound up to the highest pitch, one fatal circumstance frustrated all, before a fair trial could be given for the success of so well-concerted a train of preparation. On the very day, the night of which was to put all to issue, a burst of insurrectionary violence displayed itself among the mob, who rose in various quarters of the city, for the avowed purpose of pillaging the grocers' shops of coffee and sugar, the scarcity of which commodities had raised their price beyond the standard of the people's ideas of justice, or their own convenience, which latter, as usual, regulated their estimate of the former. Prompt measures were taken by the government to quell these riots. The barriers were all closed—all passports were, without exception, recalled—difficulties to the slightest movement towards escape became insurmountable, and the intended enterprise was consequently totally abandoned.

The hopes of Cornelius and his friends did not wholly sink with this failure. His sanguine disposition supported him, and he would not consent to despair. But he was now left nearly alone. Terror had seized upon almost all those few adherents who had braved the dangers of the times, and returned in Paris after the king's death. The Chevalier de Jarjayes was one of these staunch friends whom nothing could daunt; and another existed in the person of the brave and faithful Father O'Collogan. He had not, however from the first, the least hope of success in the plans for escape. He was determined to go through in all hazards with the proceedings of his friend; but he told him, as he coolly drew off the jack-boots in which he had been accoutred for his ride in the capacity of postilion, "I knew well enough, agra, that sorrow's the one of these boots would cross the back of a horse in this attempt, any how. No, no, the devil's too busy to let any good come of the unfortunate queen. He has an old spite against her, and you'll see every plan thwarted, depend upon it. But I'll stick close by you, my dear boy, never fear, though Ould Nick himself was to come between us. The darker the storm, the boulder I'll throw at it; so go on with your plans and plots, and here's that you may win!" With these words he quaffed off a large glass of brandy and water, for the night was cold, and he stiff with watching, and the annoyance of his tight-fitting costume.

Cornelius, nothing daunted, pressed with fresh vigour a new plan for

the queen's escape, in which he embarked almost every shilling of his remaining funds. In this effort he was assisted by several of his former associates in the *Garde-du-Corps*; a regular chain of communication was carried on by their means with the post; and the gallant de Jarjays was the counsel and support of the whole. For the success of this effort, it was necessary that the queen should escape alone, for it was found impossible, in the increasing rigour of the prison-regulations, to carry off at the same time Madame Elizabeth and the children. De Jarjays and our hero wrote in terms of the most impassioned supplication to the queen, entreating her to adopt this plan, as her life was every day menaced, and no fear was to be apprehended as they thought, for her unoffending sister or the innocent children. Marie Antoinette suffered a long struggle between her conflicting feelings on this arduous and trying question. The preparations of escape were carried on by her indefatigable adherents; but the night on which the attempt was to have been made, when the anxious Cornelius watched outside the Temple gardens for the signal of her readiness a light in her window,—no lamp appeared: as the moment of separation from her children drew near, she could not consent; and all the daring of the heroine sunk before the tenderness of the Mother.

The following letter to de Jarjays was received by the faithful Teulan, from the hand which he had been prepared to lead through the dangerous track of the prison bounds.

"We have indulged in a bright dream—that is all! but I have been deeply gratified in finding on this occasion a new proof of the devotion of yourself and your friends. You have my unbounded confidence. You must not suppose that my courage has failed: my feelings for my children have alone made me waver; happy as I should be in freedom from this horrid place, I cannot separate myself from them; away from them I could have no enjoyment, even in liberty; and this conviction leaves me without a single regret."

On the night of the third of July, 1793, her son was forced from her arms, to commence his lingering death* of sufferings and persecutions, from which the memory recoils. In a month more, the desolate mother was taken from her daughter and sister, and plunged forlorn and unaided into the narrow dungeon of the *Conciergerie*. There she lay for ten weeks, amidst all the dreary privations heaped on the most odious criminals; the stone floor and bare walls of her narrow cell receiving her bitter tears, and echoing the sighs of her brave but breaking heart. Bowed down by indignities that had no name till she endured them; bereft of the meanest consolations; torn with anxiety for the uncertain fate of her children, hopeless, agonized—did her thoughts ever fly back to her days of splendid greatness, to the magnificence of Versailles, or the more voluptuous elegance of the Trianon? or were the weary hours of this lone dungeon brightened by visions of immortality, and cheered by the whispered melodies of hope?

But those who would follow up the picture, who would indulge in the full flow of deep-felt thoughts; who would learn to scorn the

*See Note at the conclusion of this Tale.

little miseries of life, and who having understood the character of Marie Antoinette, would quench the glow of their admiration in tears of bitter sympathy with her sufferings,—these must do as I have done, and linger long in the dungeon where she laid her helpless head.

On the 12th October, she underwent a midnight examination in her cell, by the public accuser, and other officers of justice. The 14th was fixed for her trial by the revolutionary tribunal, and on the preceding day, this daughter, wife, and mother of kings, procured from the kind-hearted wife of the jailor, a needle and thread wherewith to mend her shoes!

She appeared before the court of blood, and heard the depositions of forty witnesses against her, and answered the deep toned and odious calumnies of her accusers, in words of dignity and feeling which made the guilty shrink, and sent a thrill of wondering pity through every heart not wholly petrified. She heard her sentence of death pronounced by the gloomy president, without the least emotion; and then received from the hands of a trembling gendarme a glass of water, her only sustenance for six-and-thirty hours. At half past four o'clock on the morning of the 15th, she was re-conducted to her cell, where she flung herself upon her bed, and slept soundly until six, when she was roused by the entrance of the constitutional priest, who was ordered to attend her.

She at first refused his proffered spiritual aid; and on her complaining of the violent cold in her feet, to which the stagnant blood refused to circulate, he placed a pillow on them; and then commencing his official harangue exclaimed—

“Your death is about to expiate—”

“Faults but not crimes!” interrupted she.

On the next morning all being ready for her drear farewell of the world, where she had so much enjoyed, and so much suffered, she left her dungeon, and mounted with the priest the common cart used for the conveyance of the basest criminals. Every grand and lofty feeling of her whole life seemed to have rushed back in a supernatural tide, to elevate and ennoble her appearance in that dreadful hour. As the cart was slowly dragged along through the crowded streets, from the thronged infamy of which revellings, hootings, and curses thickened the air, the lovely though decayed, the majestic though degraded martyr held her high look of blended innocence and pride. They reached the scaffold, erected in the Place d’ Louis XV. then called the *Place de la Revolution*, on the spot where her husband had been sacrificed, and in full view of all that is magnificent and beautiful in Paris. It was a fitting death-spot for the glorious woman immolated there on that day.

At the moment of mounting from the cart upon the scaffold, the officiating and officious priest said to her, “now is the moment to show your courage.”

“Courage!” replied she: “I have served a long apprenticeship to it; be convinced it will not fail me now.”

She mounted the platform firmly, threw one glance towards the

gardens of the Tuileries, another on the crowd before her, then raising her eyes to heaven she exclaimed—

"God! enlighten and soften the hearts of my murderers; adieu, my children, I go to join your father!"

The axe came down, and its echo sounded solemnly through the hushed multitude.

On one of the throng it fell like the dead hand of despair. Let not my readers start back, when they hear that Cornelius was there. It is true he was, but not as I have sketched him in the pages which have faintly traced his brief and unfortunate career. It was no longer the bold, ardent enthusiast, with mind and heart both ready to rush into the open jaws of fate; but a worn down man, fallen ere he reached his prime, under the weight of passions and feelings so strong as prematurely to destroy both the mind and body.

From the hour in which his last effort for the queen's rescue failed, the flame of hope which had lighted him on seemed suddenly extinct. His funds all gone—his friends dispersed—with his sole aim to aid his wishes or execute his plans, no more was to be done. He yielded to the paralyzing stroke of destiny, and drooped from that hour, like a young tree scathed by the lightning's breath of flame; and the only capacity of his mind seemed to be for suffering and decay.

It was now the turn of the kind hearted priest to support the expiring animation of his friend. He watched over him, and kept a guard upon actions of which Cornelius was now unheedful; and he succeeded in concealing from all observers the unclady which preyed on the ruined youth. All the functions of Cornelius's mind were perfect, though its energy was lost forever; and he sometimes even felt that heavy sense of ill, and would have given worlds to shake it off, with the acuteness in which we feel, and the hopelessness with which we strive to burst from the terrors of a dream. He could still endure, and had a passive knowledge of all he suffered; and there was a bitter agony in his state of mind which led him to brave the horrors he contemplated. The one strong impulse of his heart was still alive, and he knew and followed with his mind's dying glance every movement that was linked to the fate of his idol. He has often for a live-long night lingered listlessly outside its gloomy walls, or paced the river's bank, looking at the reflection of its dark towers within the stream; and he has for days entire poured out in the solitude of his chamber reiterated sighs for her sufferings, which might have been thought to weigh down the oppressed air.

The day of her trial came on; he attended it throughout; and he listened to her sentence of death, feeling every tone in the recess of his heart, but unable to raise his voice or lift his arm, to execrate the crime or strike down the criminal.

It was this desperate state of sensation which irresistibly prompted him to witness her execution. He had resolution enough left to bear him up through the harrowing scene; but he had lost the whole force of character which would before have driven him mad at the very surmise of the terrible event; and when his inseparable attendant, the good priest, watched him and held him closely, as the axe severed her beautiful head from her emaciated body, he marked the

shudder which crept through Cornelius's frame, but saw no expression in his looks to tell that the chill of agony, nearly as cold as that of death, had frozen every fibre.

"It is all over," murmured Cornelius in a sepulchral tone, which spoke like the echo of the grave,—*"now is my hour of preparation come!"*

Seizing the arm of the priest with a grasp of nervous agitation he hurried on to their common lodging, and he then in abrupt and broken sentences announced his inflexible resolution to go immediately to Ireland; to visit the home of his ancestors; to bend over his father's grave; and then, ———, but the expression of his final purpose did not pass his pale and trembling lips. He pressed his companion to accompany him, to fly for ever from the hateful land which virtue and hope seemed to have abandoned, and to take up his quiet abode in the country of his birth, where the vices which prevail are those of men, not fiends; and in which all the counterbalancing charities of life abound in a profusion that scarcely elsewhere exists. But Father O'Colloghan firmly declined his entreaties. He agreed to accompany him to the sea coast, and to put him on board the vessel which was to carry him away from the field of his lost fortune and his ruined happiness; but dearly as he loved Ireland, and much as he longed to be there again, he would not consent to abandon France. His duty kept him there, he said, and he felt his assertion to be true; and solemnly vowed to devote himself to the task of reclaiming the guilty through all dangers, and solacing the innocent in all sufferings.

I must not clog the fainting interest of my story with details of the methods used by the friends to effect their several purposes. They succeeded in them however; and Father O'Colloghan followed with his streaming eyes the little vessel which bore Cornelius to his native land once more, in spite of all the difficulties opposed to national intercourse and individual escape.

Father O'Colloghan returned to Paris, and there with unflinching courage maintained his sublime devotion to his sense of right; and had his reward for innumerable dangers and anxieties, in the secret prayers of the just whom he solaced in hours of sorrow, and in the gratitude of the sinners to whom he ministered comfort in the moments of death-bed repentance. He finally, at the restoration of order, took his course, to Flanders, to the town where I met him; and there, in the humble exercise of his duty, he was fixed, and still remains, I believe, having safely passed the scorching ordeal of the revolution, unharmed by its perils, untainted by its crimes. He there learned the fate of the lost Armand, who fled from Paris, after one of its bloody days, in a paroxysm of remorse, joined the army of Dumourier, and found on the field of Gemappe a grave too glorious for his renegade fears and imbecile kindness of heart.

Cornelius—and here let my pen run quickly, that a hurried paragraph may record his fate, while a deep sigh stifles the anticipated reproaches of those who can stop to censure him. He reached his ancient home, where his faithful Bryan waited anxiously the return he had announced. He was barely recognized,—no more, by this shocked and terrified friend; he was so wan, so silent, and so weak.

He paid a short visit immediately on his arrival to the burial ground, and he returned to the lone house in a state of great exhaustion. It was evening, and he ordered Bryan to leave him; and he strictly forbade every boisterous expression of welcome which the delighted peasantry were preparing, to hail the return of him who was no more their chief. His devoted followers obeyed his orders, and countermanded all the preparations for bonfires and other marks of greeting, which Bryan himself had undertaken. For hours a dim light flickered in the chamber where Cornelius sat, and a desolate silence reigned throughout. About midnight, Bryan was walking in lonely wonderment and grief outside the house, and gazing up at intervals at the faintly lighted casement of his master's room, when he heard the report of a pistol coming from that direction. He was riveted to the spot with dread; but a wide bursting flame, which seemed to fill the room, made him spring from his attitude of terror, and he rushed into the house and up stairs. The flames were rushing out under the door of Cornelius's room, which Bryan vainly endeavored in his terror to force open. The neighboring peasants, alarmed by the spreading fire, came at length to his aid; and when they succeeded in breaking the pannels, and entered the chamber, such had been the ravages of the fierce element, that the body of the hapless suicide was more than half consumed in the heap of combustible matter which he had drawn around him and set fire to. A pistol was held firm in one deep-scathed hand; and a half-burnt portrait lay clasped in the other on his breast.

A considerate jury found a verdict of insanity; and his bones were laid in honorable sepulchre with those of his ancient race.

Bryan Muteable, if the priest was right, lived sadly and lonely in the blackened and crumbling walls of the old mansion, at the time I learned this story; and he was sure for life of that refuge, for his attached master secured it to him by will, and added a scanty but still sufficient provision, formed of all the little residue of his fortune.

NOTE.

This story is strictly a Historical Romance, on a small scale combining some interweavings of fiction with much that is, unfortunately, of deep and sorrowful truth. Well may we exclaim,

pity 'tis 'tis true.

But the events here related form one of the cases in which fact cannot be too forcibly impressed on the public mind. Many highly liberal persons are for letting the details of the first French Revolution be forgotten, or for slurring them over, with sophistical excuses. I think those apologists are mistaken in supposing such a course to be favorable to the popular cause. The main-spring of the democratic principle is the education of the people. But it is not by paint-

ing out the misdeeds of their oppressors and passing over or palliating their own, that the people can be truly enlightened. As penalties are inflicted by the laws less for the punishment than for the prevention of crime, so should pictures of popular excess be held up, not so much to create horror for what has occurred as to become warnings of what may be avoided. The great importance of History is not that it forms records of the past—but that it gives rules for the future. The lover of liberty should not be content with stating that the feudal lords and absolute Kings *tyrannized* over their serfs and subjects. The true lesson to teach is that they *degraded* them—that they reduced them below the level of natural man—that they made them worse than beasts—such in fact as they had become when the outburst of the French Revolution let them loose, in all their brute ferocity.

It is by showing the world the loathsome moral state that a nation has been brought to by aristocratical abuse, that other nations will be most powerfully impressed with the policy of curtailing aristocratical privileges where they already exist, and of curbing them tightly in the formation of new states of society. To exclude them altogether is incompatible with the existence of civilization. To keep them within just and salutary bounds is the great experiment which the New World is now trying; for its own happiness and for the edification of the Old.

But the way to regenerate a people is to show the actual generation what their forefathers—or even what their fathers—were, although the truth may be harsh and painful. Would the Parisian crowds of 1830 have risen to that amazing height of magnanimous patriotism had they not full in their memories the monstrous deeds of the Parisian rabble of 1790—91—92, and 93? How many sons of the *Septembrizers*—the prison-murderers of those fearful times—had their uplifted arms staid in “the three glorious days” from shame of the butcheries committed by their parents? Much of the sublimity

of those three days undoubtedly sprung from abhorrents of the events of forty years before. And though even that sublimity cannot efface the stains nor throw a shade on the crimes of the Reign of Terror, it brings them out into a brighter and bolder relief, and shows them at once hideous and instructive.

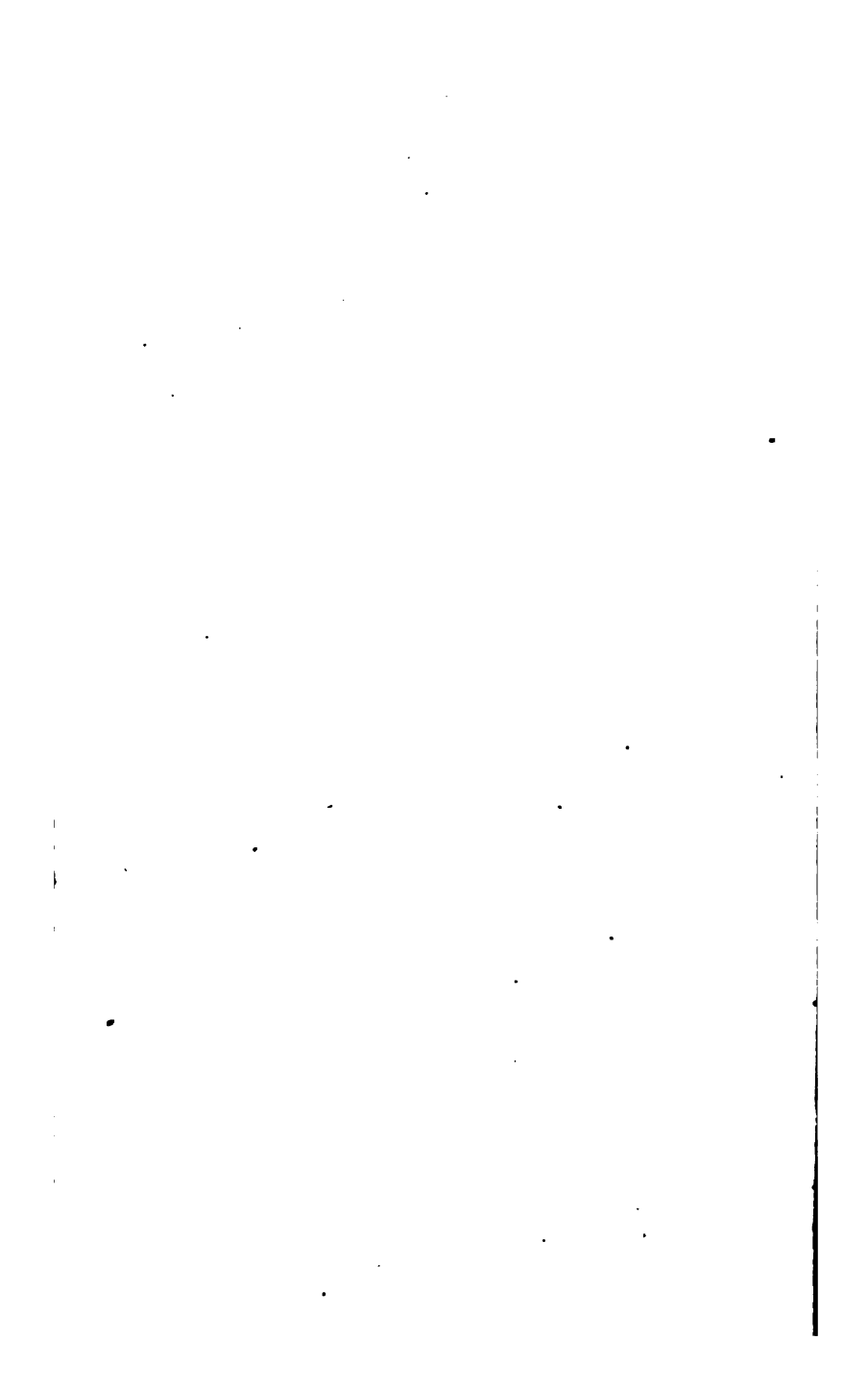
The first duty of a writer who deals with Historical characters, is to come as near to the truth as conflicting accounts permit of. Marie Antonette required that justice more than most heroines of History, at the hands of whoever made her and her sufferings the subject of description. I took infinite pains to seek for facts—not merely from books written in favor, or in abuse, of the Queen of France—but by conversation with many persons of high station who had known her personally, and with several in the middle and lower walks of life who had hated her politically, or who had heard, and perhaps retailed, the slanders that no witness of any rank has ever yet substantiated.

Years are rolling over. Twenty have elapsed since I sought for the materials of my tale, chiefly in Versailles itself, the scene of its principal events, and where many actors in, or witnesses of, them resided, as I did for several months myself. Those individuals are fast disappearing from the stage of life. Many of my informants are no more. From the high bred-marquess, who came back after years of exile, to sigh out his latter days in the place where he had flattered away his earlier existence; to the burly *Bourgeois*, who had braved and survived the revolutionary storm; and, lower still, to the intelligent old cobbler, who worked in his wooden stall, fronting the celebrated building called the *jeu de paume*, in my time just as he had worked there in the memorable days which I felt myself irresistibly impelled to describe, and of which he retained so vivid a recollection. From these and a host of such witnesses I obtained many of my facts, and the confirmation of most of my opinions; and I have never found reason to doubt the accuracy of either.

The death of the unhappy child who was the dauphin, is alluded to in the text without any expression of doubt as to its having occurred. This was an original oversight not yet corrected. The death of the son of Louis XVI. was never proved. It has been denied by many; it is doubted by millions; and all the probabilities of evidence and reasoning combine to strengthen the wide-spread belief that the boy was removed from the Temple, long after the murder of his parents, and another child substituted for him.

Several pretenders to his identity have of late years appeared. The one whose case is decidedly the strongest, and whose claims have obtained the most attention, is the individual now residing in England, and self-styled the Duke of Normandy. His story, though not convincing, is nevertheless very curious; as the real, in personal questions, derives much of its interest from the romantic. What may be the result of the enquiries into this subject it is useless to speculate on. It is one of those mysteries interesting to plunge into, but difficult indeed to fathom; for though the truth may be at the bottom of the well, so many powerful interests combine in keeping it there, that there is little likelihood of its ever seeing the light.

Cornelius, the hero of the story, was as is stated, a real character, though even that name is a feigned one. His adventures and his fate were related to me by a friend of a branch of his family, which is of great respectability. The worthy old priest is also drawn from life—and he has been drawn from it in a more serious manner since I sketched his portrait! He is gone; and I am sure if he ever saw and recognized himself in print he forgave the author, who meant him no disrespect, in a portraiture that might be considered a little overcharged.



THE
VOUEE AU BLANC.

White she is, as a lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon
When out of sight the clouds are driven,
When she is left alone in heaven.

APOLOGETICAL NOTE.

A word of apology and explanation is due here, not so much to my English readers (who would perhaps pardon, unsolicited, a liberty taken with a foreign language,) as a body much more critical and tenacious—the French Academy. Any one of the strict grammarians of The Institute, who might happen to see the title of this tale, would be, no doubt, indignant at a foreigner having presumed to invent a word for which the dictionary gives no authority. There is certainly no such substantive as *Vouee*, nor does the verb admit of such a formation. The only way in which a French writer could construct a title correctly, saying what I meant to express by mine, would be the phrase, “L’Enfant Voué au Blanc,” “La fille Vouée au Blanc,” or some such. But as neither the word *enfant* nor *filles* assorted well with my notion, and as I was resolved that my title page should tell that my heroine was *Vouée au Blanc*, I thought the particle *The* put before these words would make my meaning evident; would avoid the awkward *calemburg* formed by “*La Vouee au Blanc*,” (rather at variance to be sure with the livery of the gentlemen of the long robe;) and more particularly still, that my title being thus an acknowledged jumble of English and bad French, it might find pardon where a more pretending inaccuracy could not have escaped.

THE
VOUEE AU BLANC.

CHAPTER I.

"You are always so desponding, Jules!"

"No, indeed, my dear Marguerite, it is you who are too sanguine."

"Too sanguine! well, I do not and cannot bring myself to give up all hope."

"I know you can't, my dear, and if it comforts you, hope on in God's name."

"Why now, wasn't there Madame St. Paul after fifteen years, and four other instances, after eight, ten, and a dozen; to say nothing of Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV, after twenty-three years?"

"How old was Madame St. Paul, my dear Marguerite?"

"How old!"

"Well, how young, if you like the word better?"

"Why, she acknowledged to thirty-five, but I am sure she was full forty, aye, and past it."

"And what's the date of your christening certificate, Marguerite?"

"That's the way you invariably taunt me, Jules, but I don't care if I had been christened half a century back."

"It was not much less my dear."

"Even so, St. Ursula is good, and can work a miracle when she pleases; but indeed, Jules, your unfortunate incredulity mars the effect of all my prayers and the saint's interference."

A shake of the head, with a deep sigh, were the only answers; and here ended the conversation for awhile. The speakers were Mr. Suberville, a wealthy manufacturer of Normandy, and his wife. The tenor of their short discourse may possibly have led my readers into the nature of its subject, and their respective characters. But a word or two on the latter point is perhaps necessary for a full understanding of the first. Mr. Suberville was a man of exceedingly mild manners and amiable disposition, whose most striking faculty was a certain tact at seeing things with great clearness and precision. He had a particular keenness of eye, intellectual as well as physical, and there was a strict analogy between his mental and bod-

ily pursuits. He was a great sportsman and a sure shot; but he was rarely known to pull his trigger at a bird that was out of range. In the same way he was indefatigable in his commercial pursuits; but he scarcely undertook a hazardous speculation. His game-bag and his money-bag were therefore always respectively filled. At the long run he was sure to realize more than his neighbors, who might surpass him perhaps for one successful day, or in one particular venture, by dashing at every thing and risking to miss all.

His wife was of a very different temperament. Her hopes were in many instances excessive, and she clung to them with unflinching pertinacity. She seldom had a clear view of any subject, but she pursued through thick and thin whatever phantom might for the time being flit before her brain. She had one strong passion in common with her husband; that was a longing desire for children—or at least for a child. She was quite certain, on her marriage, that she should be the mother of a numerous offspring; and she had scarcely forsworn her celibacy, when she began to occupy herself in preparing for a family increase; and she only gazed on her bridal robes to project their various transformations, into baby linen and child's dresses.

Mr. Suberville thought that all this was rather premature; but having no sort of superstition in his character, he did not actually augur ill from these somewhat ominous anticipations; and his tenderness increased tenfold. He felt and revelled in all that delightful wonderment which men of five-and-twenty experience, on the first hopes that they are about to be invested with the most respectable of all titles; and these hopes were all strongly encouraged by the opinion of his old friend and former school-fellow Doctor Glautie, the village practitioner; and not being more profoundly versed than new-married men generally are in such secrets, he took for granted all that his lady and her physician asserted.

But his natural acuteness of perception soon began to take the alarm—he could not help hinting to his wife the doubts that used to cross him in spite of himself; and he went on day after day, and month after month, increasingly incredulous, till, at the expiration of a year, his discomfited helpmate was forced to acknowledge her mistake, and to give vent to her disappointment in tears. Mr. Suberville thought that was a bad way of remedying the evil; but at the end of five years of married disappointment, the unlucky husband, then thirty years of age, sat down in the sad but philosophic conviction, that he was not destined to be the founder of a new race.

Not so his better half—she lingered on for many a long day in all the wretched exaltation of hope deferred. Having exhausted the aids of medical advice, she took to a species of assistance less in fashion at the epoch. She had, when a child, in accordance with Roman Catholic custom, made voluntary choice of Saint Ursula, for her patron and example through life; and in pious hope of her holy assistance she went on secretly praying, and loudly declaring her certainty of success. This alliance with religion continued uninterrupted for fifteen years after the period of her husband's abandonment of hope, until the day of the conversation before recorded; and Madame Suberville, having then arrived at the twentieth anniversary of

her marriage, was as firmly as ever persuaded of the great chance of St. Ursula's interference in her behalf, to which she thought little bar existed but in the obstinate skepticism of her husband.

The evening on which this story was one in the latter part of 1798; and Mr. and Madame Suberville were at that time taking their wonted after-dinner walk in the valley in which his manufactory and his dwelling-house stood. They seldom wandered beyond the precincts of their own property, and it was little wonderful that that should content them, for in the whole province there was not a spot more beautiful and sequestered. It was situated a few miles from Rouen, far down on the left hand of the road leading to Dieppe. In my irregular and perhaps somewhat romantic style of noting down out-of-the-way places, I have called the spot in my journal "*La Vallée des trois Villages*;" The Vale of the three Villages. It was thus the peasants designated it, when it first spread out before me, as I stood on the wooded hill rising high above it to the westward, and gazed on its combinations of great loveliness. I was afterwards informed of its more correct appellation, but I quite forget it at this moment—and as I have said on a former occasion, I do not pretend to much accuracy of geographical detail.

The period of my first acquaintance with this valley was nearly twenty years after that of Mr. and Madame Suberville's before-mentioned walk; but I have good reason to believe that not one of its features was in the least changed during that long interval. Its three neat villages, or rather hamlets, retained nearly the same proportions. Its half dozen large cotton manufactories, from careful repairs of accidents, and oft renewed coats of white-wash, showed not one symptom of decay. As many houses, occupied by the proprietors, built of brick, and regularly reddened at stated epochs, looked (like painted ladies when past their meridian) but little the worse for the wear and tear of time. The full-grown trees defied the advance of a quarter of a century. The blades of grass sprang up in the twentieth generation, as green as their predecessors, and so unaltered as to read a lesson on the mutability of mankind. The pieces of cotton cloth spread out on the lawns, might be supposed to have lain bleaching there unchanged for the whole period in question; and the sweet stream glided along as gaily and brightly as was natural to its perpetual and ever-springing youth. The same air of bustling population and comfortable cleanliness was, no doubt, observable in the place since the earliest establishment of the manufactories, and was unquestionably very delightful to those who think these advantages cheaply purchased by the loss of rustic simplicity. For my own part, the only drawback on my enjoyment of the scene was the observation of those traits of manufacturing improvements, which are so much at variance with my notions of rural beauty. I can admire such a prospect to a limited extent; but the very fact of my admiration having bounds, proves to me that there is something too much or too little in the scene; and I prefer the wildest mountain view with its scattered huts and homely, rough-handed inhabitants, to the most trim enclosure, the neatest cottages, and fairest skins round Glasgow or Manchester.

From the summit of the hill which overhung the valley, an exten-

sive view opened far about it and beyond it. Rouen was closely perceptible on the right, in all its feudal mixture of filth and picturesqueness: its houses crowded together in streets that almost forbade the sun beams to pass freely through them; and its church spires rising beautifully up from masses of buildings at once grotesque and graceful. The broad Seine rolled by, washing in its course islands of verdure and banks of rich variety, while the view was bounded by hills of respectable elevation, and covered with wood; at the foot of which the laboring river worked its way towards the ocean, and seemed coiling itself like some huge serpent round all the visible earth. When I first saw it from this position, an autumnal sun was sinking upon its dusky bosom, for its brightness had been dimmed by the accession of smaller streams, which had joined its course, and disturbed its muddy channel. Had I stood on the same spot twenty years before, I have no doubt the landscape would have looked the same; except that it would have been adorned by the figures of Mr. and Madame Suberville, with something more of activity and less of caducity about them than in my time certainly.—We will just then step back those identical twenty years, and resume the thread of my narration and their discourse.

Mr. Suberville often sauntered silently on for a quarter of an hour or more; Madame very rarely indeed. On the present occasion, that period had barely elapsed from the nod and the sigh which my readers may remember to have checked the dialogue, when she put her right hand upon his right arm that was supporting her left as they walked: "What are you thinking of so profoundly, my dear?" asked she. "Of the old subject, my love."

"What, of adopting one of those noisy, lying brats of nephews of yours?"

"Why, yes. You know, Marguerite, I never proposed it to you, till many a year after I had utterly despaired of your having children."

"Well then my dear, I'll consent to it when I utterly despair." Mr. Suberville shrugged up his shoulders; and I may take advantage of the short pause which ensued, to mention a little point of his family history. His only brother, who was two years his junior, was the captain of a merchant vessel, trading to America and the West Indies; and had, after an early life of great adventure, settled in Rouen, his native town. He there married a person of inferior situation, of extremely vulgar manners, and no beauty; being caught as sailors sometimes are, by the first fair words employed to entrap him. The captain's spouse had children just as fast as it was possible to have them, and once gave birth to twins. Each new confinement (and the last mentioned in a double degree) added to the dislike, and I fear envy of *our* Madame Suberville, who could see nothing in either boys or girls, but the ill-favored visage of their mother, and the boisterous manners of their sire. Mr. Suberville the elder could not close his accurate eye upon the peculiarities that were so visible to his wife through the medium of her prejudices. But he thought that the mist she saw through enlarged the objects it enveloped, and he was therefore disposed to believe both her objections and his own exaggerated; and he repeatedly declared that he would

prefer adopting one of his brother's children to that of any other man.

This argument was gone over for the thousandth time after the pause which allowed me to make the foregoing communication to the reader. Madame Suberville had taken up the subject, and had enforced in her best manner all her old objections, when being more than ordinarily heated by the effects of her own eloquence, she finished her tirade with the following words: "Well, Jules, it does not signify talking; I would rather consent to adopt a peasant's child, out of that hut, than one of your hateful relatives!"

"Marguerite!" said Mr. Suberville, half seriously, half jokingly, his eyes fixed steadily on her, "I verily believe Saint Ursula has worked the miracle."

"How! Where! What do you mean, Jules?" asked she, quite in a flutter, "Do you see any change?"

"No, no, my dear don't be afraid; I don't exactly mean what you mean;—but merely that this is the first word you ever let slip since your marriage, of your possible consent to my adopting any child."

"And is that all, Mr. Suberville? is it thus you trifle with a woman in my—in my possible situation?"

"I am sure I did not mean any thing unkind, dear Marguerite, for I have not been better, nay nor so well pleased with you for full fifteen years. Take my arm, my dear, and walk on."

Madame Suberville took the proffered arm rather sulkily, and her husband stepped on at a brisk pace; and proposed, as the evening was so fine, that they should prolong their walk through the wood towards the summit of the hill. Satisfaction at his evident pleasure prevailed over the lurking remains of her ill humor, and she consented.

They had turned into one of the narrow lanes which led up from the rivulet, and were approaching a cottage that was only betrayed in its seclusion by the smoke curling through the trees, when the prattle of a group of children made them suddenly look towards an opening in the hedge beside them. Madame Suberville, who was next to it, had no sooner turned her head than she stopped suddenly short, and cried out, "Heavens, what a cherub!" Her husband at the same moment exclaimed, "Good God, how beautiful!" and the worthy couple stood fixed a few minutes, gazing on the object of their admiration, without uttering another word.

I need scarcely say, that it was a child which so surprised them; and it is evident that from their having singled out one of the group, the others must have presented a contrast to its appearance. The fact was, that Madame Suberville's "cherub" was a little girl of about two years old, of uncommon beauty, fair skin, golden hair, blue eyes, and bright complexion; and was also distinguished from the others by the singular difference of her dress. These last, a boy, and two girls, were all clad in the coarse blueish-gray fustian, and wore the wooden shoes, common to the children of peasants; but the youngest was dressed in white from head to foot; which, aided, as it was, gave a considerable brilliancy to her complexion, and an air of superiority altogether to her person. The materials of her little frock were still only the coarsest kind of cotton; her shoes were of

white cloth, and the whole so disfigured with the clay and mud in which the party had been rolling about, that it required the more dusky appearance of the others to give to this little white thing any particular look of cleanliness. Madame Suberville's whole attention was fixed on the beautiful face of the child; and her husband's glance had discovered in a moment that it was an infant which, in pursuance of a religious custom, had been *voue au blanc*—dedicated to the Virgin.

While they stood pondering in this way, the children stopped their play, and the mother of the family presented herself at the door. She was evidently from Brittany, by the proofs of violet-colored sleeves to a white-bodied gown, a long flapped cap, a black apron, and red stockings. There was an air of benevolence, too, in her countenance, which, though it may find occasional counterparts in Normandy, is not exactly the general expression of physiognomy in that litigious province.

After some general remarks from Madame Suberville as to the beauty of her children, but particularly of the youngest, Mr. Suberville drew from her the information that she had been only a week in her present habitation, she and her husband having been forced from Brittany by the ill-will of her neighbors, in consequence of their having formerly shown a disposition of partial sympathy with the ruined fortunes of the La Vendee royalists.

To the question why the little one had been consecrated to the Virgin, she detailed some facts that may have an air at once romantic and common-place; but which were very true, and had nothing whatever wonderful about them in France at the epoch in question. Little Leonie was not, then, the child of this honest peasant woman, but of a mother who, during the destruction of the Royalist armies, had sought the shelter of Madame Bignon's cottage. This unfortunate mother was wholly unknown, but certainly a person of respectable rank and refined education, as was evident according to Madame Bignon's account, from numerous circumstances. Long suffering, fatigue, and mental agitation brought her to the grave in a few days after giving birth to her child, in the miserable secrecy and more miserable attendance of the peasant's cottage; but with almost her last breath she made two requests of the kind hearted woman who sheltered her. The first was, that she would register the child as her own; for Madame Bignon was on the point of being confined—the reason of this unhappy woman having chosen *her* refuge in preference to any other offered by the humane inhabitants of the district. The second was, that the child should be devoted to the Virgin for the space of fifteen years. The worthy woman promised to fulfil both these requests; and the poor mother expired, with grateful acknowledgments on her dying lips that she had found a protectress for her infant, and that she was quitting the world with the secret undiscovered of her real name and connection. And here, lest my readers should prepare themselves for some trick or mystery, I warn them that I have never, to the day on which I write, been able to obtain the solution of that secret; nor is there now the remotest chance of its ever coming to light. The infant was

registered as her own by Madame Bignon, together with one of which she was delivered a few days following the stranger's death; and she continued, till her encountering Mr. Suberville, to keep up Leonie's white costume; which, even during the temporary suspension of religious rites, she contrived to do without having excited any very particular observation.

Mr. Suberville remarked with great delight, not only the unusual kindness of his wife's manners, but the smiling docility with which the child received her attentions. He did not, however, give utterance to his pleasure, determined to let things take their own course. Madame put many questions to the woman as to the child's age and disposition. The poor woman wept while she alluded to the loss of her real mother; and both Madame Suberville and her husband felt their eyes full, as Leonie burst from the arms of the former, ran across the room, and held up her innocent looking face to kiss off the tears of her mamma. She pronounced this soft and endearing name half-a-dozen times; and, as the woman's countenance brightened up while returning her embrace, she nestled her head upon her bosom to which she was clasped, in a mixture of infantine pleasure and bashfulness, at the emotion and observation she had called forth.

"Oh, Jules, Jules!" exclaimed Madame Suberville, wiping her eyes, and in a voice quite unlike her common tone, "if we had such a child as that!"

"Or that!" said her husband.

The little girl at this moment recovering from her fit of bashfulness, turned round her glowing and smiling face full upon them; when Madame Suberville started suddenly up, crying "come along, come along, Jules. I cannot venture to stay here another moment."

For a month after this first visit a continual intercourse was kept up with the cottage, and a sort of dumb-show, pantomimic flirtation between the wishes and hopes of Madame Suberville on the one hand, and the anxiety and prudence of her husband on the other. She felt as if her sentiments on the subject of children had undergone a total change, for she had nothing in the present instance of that asperity which seemed usually mixed with her natural fondness, on observing the mutual happiness between parents and their infants. A notion of a supernatural influence continually crossed her mind, and she began to think that there was a tone peculiarly prophetic in her husband's exclamation "that Saint Ursula" had worked the miracle." Her mind was quite filled with the image of little Leonie, and she was never satisfied when she was not before her eyes. She strove to keep off from even herself the acknowledgment that she wished to adopt the child, and she combatted the notion for some time by arguments of the possibility of her still becoming a mother. This fancy had received, however, a mortal blow from her new-born attachment. It lingered in her brain, it is true, but was becoming day by day more faint; and the only thing which could have saved it from extinction would have been something like opposition from her husband—but this she ran no chance of meeting.

He wisely resolved to let the whole affair flow on as if he acquiesced in, rather than suggested it; and he made a secret vow that let

the actual fact of the adoption be delayed as it might, the proposal for it should come from Madame herself.

Manifold were the consequent scenes of inflexible steadiness on his part, opposed to his thousand efforts on that of a wife, to elicit from him the first expression of the desire that seemed as it were settled on the tip of her tongue, and every instant forcing against her lips for utterance. She made innumerable attempts to lead him into this snare, not only by regular train-laying, round-about plans of conversation, but by abrupt and startling flights from other subjects, calculated to throw him off his guard—but all in vain. Matters went on in this way for three or four weeks, until at length Madame Suberville found she had no chance of carrying her point; and, convinced that she could not obtain the merit of a feigned consent to the wish of her lord and master, she came to the resolution of proposing the object, as if in opposition to her own inclinations, and merely out of a magnanimous desire to please him. Mr. Suberville knew all that was working in her mind, and she could not avoid detecting his forced reserve; but they still went on in the resolute performance of their parts, true to that ridiculous but general habit of husbands and wives, to keep up an appearance of cheating each other, though reciprocally conscious that the attempted delusion is seen through.

One sentence may rapidly tell the result. Madame Suberville proposed to her husband to adopt Leonie, and received in reply an embrace that savoured more of reality than any of which she retained the remembrance; Madame Bignon, the peasant woman, and her husband, consented, after a struggle, to give up the child; she changed homes and parents with unconscious smiles; her certificate of baptism was duly procured, and her adoption formally registered according to law; and she was finally installed in a snug little room close to the bed of the good couple, in the peculiar charge of Aimee Lestocq, the faithful handmaid who had partaken of all Madame Suberville's confidence from her wedding day to the morning when she was forced to possess herself of a child at second hand, as it were.

Like all family changes of the great or the little, this memorable affair caused serious dissatisfaction and disappointment to some, in proportion as it gave pleasure to others. Convulsions of anger on the part of the Captain, and hysterical affections on that of his lady, were naturally to be looked for, but they were slight in comparison with the nervous agitation of Doctor Glautte, who might be considered quite a part of Mr. Suberville's family, and had as good reason as the nearest relatives to be alarmed at the arrangement. This learned physician had been for twenty years the constant companion of his old school-fellow, and the counsellor of Madame; the dinner eater of the one, and the toad eater of the other. When I say companion, I mean that he had a chair and a knife and fork every day placed for him at the table; and by the word counsellor, I would imply the instigator and abettor of all the foolish fancies of a weak woman. In fact, Dr. Glautte was not suited for the fellowship of Mr. Suberville, nor the confidence of his wife. He was decidedly, a bold word, the most dunder-headed doctor that ever took out a diploma. Clumsy alike in person and understanding, he might be compared to a bloated leech sucking in the prosperity

of his spare and diminutive friend—for such was Mr. Suberville's appearance; and the only approach he ever made towards ratiocination was his adoption of the then popular doctrine of materialism, on the avowed grounds that this conviction arose from the study of *himself*. He had nevertheless acquired over both Mr. and Madame Suberville an influence, which would have been wonderful, if we could deny the painful truth that mankind are more the slaves of habit than the subjects of good sense. Thus the corpulent Mr. Glautte had become quite necessary as a listener to Mr. Suberville when he sat down to dinner; and indispensable as pulse-feeler, blood-letter, and fancy-tickler to his spouse. When he heard from Aimee of the adoption of the child, he was thunderstruck. He had an intuitive sense of his own stupidity, and when he gazed on the vivacious countenance and animated gestures of his infant rival, felt like Othello, that his 'occupation was gone,' and was, to use his own original phrase, "*joliment flambe*." The only symptom which ever denoted emotion in the pulpy countenance of the doctor was a wide-opening of the eyelids and a fearful projection of the eyes themselves. Aimee, who had rarely witnessed this expression, was quite alarmed as he stared upon her; and without well knowing what she did, she put the newly dressed Leonie close up to his face to rouse him from his appalling stiffness of attitude and look. At sight of the little smiling thing his eyes rolled back into their sockets, and he gave a start of horror from the recollection of his situation; for he felt in his heart's core that he was reduced all at once to a mere cypher, in the account which his quondam patient and patroness had settled with herself. He made the best of a bad affair; submitted with what grace he could; resolved to give to the husband a double portion of that attention which had been heretofore so largely shared with the wife; and sat down to dinner pretty nearly as dull and dazy as ever, but with a quickened resolution acting upon the inertness of his general feelings, to be a continual thorn in the bed of roses which was destined for his little innocent and unconscious supplanter.

CHAPTER II.

It does not require a very fertile imagination to conceive all the improvements which a twelve-month effected in our little heroine. Great attention from her new parents, unvarying care from Aimee Lestocq, with good diet and cleanliness, made her in appearance perfectly bewitching, while she gradually lost all tincture of vulgarity, and became a complete little gentlewoman in comparison to her former supposed sisters who were still her playmates and constant friends. She had already however learned to call Mr. and Madame Suberville papa and mamma; and the young Bignons, taking the matter as it was represented to them,

invariably talked of her and to her as Leonie Suberville. Even the Captain and his wife had, after their first angry paroxysm was over, discovered the policy of conquering their resentment; and in the formal and unfrequent visits which they paid to their relatives, they taught their children to call the little protegee by the gentle appellation of "cousin." Everything went smoothly on with her, except her intercourse with Doctor Glautte. This was naturally very close, for long custom had made him and his prescriptions absolutely necessary to Madame Suberville, and her old passion for doctoring herself and her family was now of course extended to the child.

Many acts of ill nature and spitefulness, whenever Leonie ventured the least familiarity, such as making a horse of his gold-headed cane, or playing with his one large ear-ring, the peculiar ornament of his person, made the doctor an object of continued terror to the child, and of indescribable aversion and suspicion to her faithful nurse. This latter made it a rule from which she never swerved, to throw out of the window every prescription which the doctor made up for Leonie; and as she was entrusted by her mistress with the administering of these potions, she had it always in her power to substitute some gentle harmless preparation for the mere scientific compounds of the doctor; thus (even supposing him to have been perfectly honest) preserving the child from the evils which medicine prepares for the human constitution. The doctor, however, had the credit of all the advantage thus derived by Leonie, who was, on the Shrove Tuesday immediately following her third birth-day, one of the most perfect models ever seen of infantine health and loveliness.

Every body knows what an important epoch *Mardi Gras* forms in the annual enjoyments of the French. It is the last day of the carnival gaieties, and that which precedes the gloominess of Lent. People seem to think it the festival which of all others entitles them to be joyous, for it is a kind of debateable ground, as it were, between gaiety and mortification, a winding up of the pleasure season, and the last opportunity for indulgence, before the dreary and interminable anticipation of six weeks' nominal abstinence. The principal amusement of this holiday is the procession of the *Beuf Gras*. A description of a thing so commonly known would be useless here, did I merely write for the majority of travellers, who have witnessed it in Paris, or other great towns. But even those have little idea of how much more enjoyment it presents in such a confined circle as the commune of "The Three Villages;" and, independent of that, there is a numerous class of my untravelled countrymen, who, in remote parts of our islands, may never have heard of the festival in question, until a straggling copy of the book I am now writing chances to work its way among them.

The *Beuf Gras*, then, means literally the fattest ox in the town. The competition for this honor leads to many an extraordinary exhibition of more than natural dimensions; and I have known some of those stall-fed, pampered victims of butchering ambition attain to enormous weights. On the morning of the festival the ponderous animal is prepared with a pomp of decoration suiting the wealth of the parish. In the commune of "The Three Villages" it is not likely that the scarlet body-clothes, and other trappings, presented as gaudy a display as those

of more important places; but I think I may safely say, that the garland of flowers which crowned the head of the poor passive victim was quite as fragrant and blooming as any culled in all France, to be afterwards stained with the blood of the prize beast on whose horns it flourished. As for the crowning ornament of the whole, I would defy the world to excel it! This is invariably, and from time immemorial, the prettiest child of the parish, who, seated in a palanquin, and covered by a canopy of flowers and silks, is paraded on the back of the *Bœuf Gras*, an emblem of innocent beauty riding triumphantly over the gross and brutal enjoyments of mankind. A band of music precedes the little deity of the feast; who is escorted before, beside, and after the moving throne by the younger of the butchers, mounted on horses, dressed in a fanciful costume of feathered caps, embroidered jackets, and silk sashes, some waving flags of various colours, and the rest armed with lances, swords, and battleaxes, appropriate to the members of all professions of blood; but, as borne by *them*, throwing an air of something like refinement over the most brutal of man's necessary trades. Crowds of people follow in their fete dress and their holiday smiles, waving handkerchiefs, dancing and singing, and uttering alternate exclamations of astonishment at the bulk of the ox and the charms of the little burden. On the occasion I am now recording, I firmly believe that the Beauty bore away the palm from the beast, and that the unfortunate animal had not his fair share of lawful admiration with the angelic being who occupied the seat upon his shoulders. I cordially hope that none of my readers can doubt the identity of this being; but to stop the guess-work that might possibly interrupt this part of my narrative, I may just record the name of Leonie Suberville, who, by a great condescension on the part of her papa, was allowed to act the part of the *Cupidon* on this occasion.

Mr. Suberville, at this period, filled the situation of mayor of his commune. I have hitherto avoided any mention of his political opinions, for the simple reason that they have nothing to do with the present tenor of my story. It may be however easily divined from the post he occupied, that he was no enemy to the Republican form of government, at that particular period of the eminence which it had gained his country among the nations of Europe. Neither have I clogged my recital with long accounts of his pursuits in business. I have sufficiently intimated that he was a wealthy manufacturer, and the fact receives confirmation by the circumstance of an unexpected visit which he received this day from rather a long visiting distance. The person who made him this morning call was Mr. Joseph Mowbray of Philadelphia, in America, who had been for years in the habit of sending large shipments of cotton direct to his correspondent and customer, Mons. Jules Suberville. He had had some slight intercourse with his brother the captain, often the carrier of these consignments; and commercial affairs having brought him to France, he was resolved to take the opportunity of forming a personal acquaintance with Mr. Suberville. Accompanied by the captain, whom he called upon at Rouen, he came out on this pleasant occasion, and had a good opportunity of seeing the object of his enquiry in all that appearance of wealth, respectability, and happiness which he seemed to merit so much. When Mr. Mowbray and his companion reached the first of the three villages, the procession was moving slowly along to-

wards the residence of the mayor. When they arrived at the house, the captain pointed out his brother who was standing on the steps in all municipal gravity, but a gravity mixed with heartfelt enjoyment. He looked a perfect union of magisterial respectability and parental pride, so at least thought Mr. Mowbray, when the little Leonie called out "papa ! papa !" from her throne of state, and Mr. Suberville opened his arms and pressed her to his heart, where she seemed to reign so supremely. A few introductory words from the captain made the mayor acquainted with his visitor. This latter spoke the French language well, and he accepted freely the prompt invitation which he received to join the early dinner just then about to be served ; but being obliged to proceed that evening to Dieppe, he was forced to decline the many pressing solicitations to prolong his visit.

As the *Bœuf Gras* was led away, the procession having reached its term, Mr. Mowbray fixed his attention for a moment on Leonie, and remarked to his host, that he thought her the most lovely creature he had ever seen.

"Why, thanks to a good constitution, she is blooming and healthy," replied the mayor.

"Aye, and still greater thanks to the skill and attention of the doctor here," said Madame Suberville, pointing to Glautte, who stood at her elbow.

Mr. Mowbray made a low bow to the doctor, who returned it in his usual way, by taking off his hat, and reclining his head a moment on his left shoulder, showing to conspicuous advantage the ponderous ear-ring which hung at the other side.

"You have reason to be proud of your good work, Sir," said Mr. Mowbray, "if you have produced the lovely bloom on these delicious little waxen cheeks."

"You flatter me, Sir," said Glautte, with a dogged expression of countenance, somewhat between a leer and a sneer ; "the child is flushed just now ; it is the hectic, perhaps, of a coming fever."

"No such thing," exclaimed Aimee Lestocq, sharply ; "the child has not a bit of fever in her pure blood : that's always the Doctor's way of running her down."

A purple suffusion was visible on the doctor's bloated cheeks, which were often painted this hue by the abrupt brushes he received from Aimee. Mr. Mowbray took no notice of the expression, but turning to Mr. Suberville, remarked, "You have really, Sir, a beauteous daughter. If it were possible to bring Philadelphia to Rouen, or take Leonie to Philadelphia, I would almost venture to express a wish, that she might one day be the wife of my only son Edward."

"A far-off wish indeed !" said Mr. Suberville, smiling. "What age is your boy ?"

"Just turned five."

"If every thing else suited as well as their age, your notion might not be impossible," replied Mr. Suberville ; and the conversation dropped there.

The day passed quickly over. Mr. Mowbray took his leave, having arranged some matters of business with his host ; and he rode out of the village, charmed with its wealthy and thriving appearance, and im-

pressed with very high ideas of Mr. Suberville's probity, good sense, and good circumstances.

CHAPTER III.

The interval between the last chapter, and the one which preceded it, advanced the progress of my tale twelve months. The space from the abrupt conclusion of the last page, to the opening of the present, includes no less a period than twelve years. That is, no doubt, a hop, step, and jump manner of getting over time: it is quite in unison, however, with the way in which time itself gets over the ground.

We must now then close our eyes on all the monotony of domestic affairs, for the space of twelve fast-flitting years, contenting ourselves with fanciful glimpses at the quiet tenor of events, passing before us like the shadowy transparencies of a dream. We must, without suffering ourselves to feel the touch of Time, silently imagine its magical and noiseless changes on the persons of the actors already introduced to the reader:—the gradual bend in the spare form of Mr. Suberville—the increasing corpulence in the still upright body of madame—the stiff and bloated growth of the doctor's person—the symmetry, grace, and loveliness of the now truly beautiful Leonie. Death, too, as well as his elder brother, Time, had been laying his bony fingers on the little circle of our old acquaintances. The captain was no more; Madame Bignon, our heroine's foster-mother, was a widow; and the honest, kind-hearted Aimee Lestooq had had many a garland strewed over her grave, and many a flood of tears poured forth to her memory, by the sweet girl who still thought of, and loved her. Her loss was irreparable; but it was supplied in the best possible manner by Lisette, the eldest of Madame Bignon's daughters, and the foster-sister of Leonie.

Mr. Suberville had been going on in gradually increasing wealth; his health kept fair and good, notwithstanding the many insidious efforts made by disease to creep into his constitution, in the semblance of strengthening draughts, and such like potations, strongly recommended by Glautte, and kindly prepared by madame, but firmly rejected by the sensible man who felt no need of help, and least of all the kind proposed. His wife, whose natural temperament was a master-piece of invincible good health, had long withstood the effects of her physician's nostrums and her own attachment to them. Her constitution struggled bravely with the noxious stuff, but she was at length beginning to show signs of a breaking-up in the system; not in any actual appearance of debility, but in a certain pearly look of her cheeks, some bilious tinges in the neighborhood of the eyes; and, above all, in occasional loss of appetite, and faintness after exertion, which, in earlier and better days, would have only braced the frame it now seemed to shake to its foundations.

Glautte, as I before intimated, was becoming somewhat stiffer, and more bloated; a little short-winded or so; more lazy, perhaps; if possible, more dull; and his limited faculties becoming every day more inflexibly hardened, and gaining symptoms of an approaching tendency to what might be called a moral ossification. Notwithstanding all this, he had one strong instinct which never lost its hold upon him. That was a power of adapting himself to circumstances, in all their various modifications. This aptitude, of which he was perfectly conscious, did not appear to him to militate, in the least degree, against his favorite theory of materialism; for he felt it to be truly what I describe it, an *instinct*; and he used to say to Mr. Suberville, in his prosing way, that "he was certain he would have displayed it in some corresponding manner, had he been merely what man was meant to be, an animal on all fours, with a long tail, and no discourse of reason." Mr. Suberville thought that the last clause of the sentence needed to be included as an obstacle. He was, however, too good tempered to send back any cutting retort on the doctor. He thought him, from long acquaintance, a consummate ass, but harmless withal; and he never in his life, by rebuff or repartee, turned the innocuous flow of his argument out of its very deep and very muddy channel. Listening to the monotonous strain had indeed become a part of Mr. Suberville's daily habits. He had got into the custom of its endurance, and it gained on him to such a pitch, that, in his afternoon musings on his own affairs, or the prospects of Leonie, he found the accompaniment of Glautte's drawling voice an absolute want, as the burring drone of a bagpipe is necessary to keep up a supply of wind for that part of the instrument which produces the melody.

Mr. Suberville's intelligent and upright conduct in his magisterial capacity ensured him a permanent continuance in his office of mayor. Willing to add another act of kindness to the many he had heaped on the doctor, he had from his first appointment, named him to the place of *adjoint*, or deputy. There never was a more perfect sinecure than this; for the active turn of Mr. Suberville's mind, united with a high sense of duty, made him perform the most trivial details himself; and he had beside, a clerk, who was a sharp, ready-witted fellow, and whose long practice in the situation made him invaluable for the minor business of the *bureau*. Glautte, therefore, received his salary for nothing; and gave himself the airs of an official man, without ever putting his foot in the office, except on occasions of the trial of petty offences, when he made it a point of conscience to sleep through the whole process, that he might be ready to join, with an unbiassed mind, in whatever sentence was pronounced by his superior.

The clerk to whom I just alluded, was a shrewd, unprincipled knave called Francois Faussecoque. He had gone through various scenes in a busy and bad life, always covering himself with disgrace, yet escaping ruin by amazing cunning. He had been active in the reign of terror; and was found so useful to the people afterwards in power, that they appointed him to the subordinate situation which he held under Mr. Suberville, who saw it was in vain to remonstrate against the nomination. He resolved, however, to keep a close watch upon his clerkship's conduct; and exercised, in fact, such a salutary severity over

him, that, except in some trifling extortion of extra fees for passports and certificates, he had actually, for several years, been an honest man per force.

As wrinkles and superstition generally keep the same pace in weak-minded individuals, who are going down hill, it is not wonderful that Madame Suberville's reliance on the patronage of St. Ursula should increase with her years, although the particular mode of her manifestations was changed. Her prayers were now put up wholly for the happiness of Leonie, who really had obtained the fullest possession of all that fondness which her honest heart had been, in her early years, hoarding up for her own long-looked-for progeny. She attributed all the beauty and amiability of her protegee to the invisible care of the saint; and the constant white dress of Leonie threw such an air of angelic softness around her, that she at times appeared to the vapory notions of Madame Suberville, the personification of something more than earthly.

The singular costume did certainly throw a peculiar grace on the beauteous form it covered; and its influence on Leonie's mind was not slight. She attended regularly to her religious duties along with Madame Suberville; and though she had too much natural good sense to be infected with her benefactress's weakness, she could not avoid catching a tinge of enthusiasm which acted somewhat wildly on a romantic temperament. She had been instructed, as soon as her mind could comprehend the facts, in the extraordinary particulars of her own story. Her kind nurse Aimee, had often and often conversed with her upon it; and she had received a thousand times, from Madame Bignon, the minutest particulars of her mother's appearance, her conversation, and death. She had read a few novels and books of poetry, and she brooded over the associations they produced, until, at times her young and ardent spirit seemed to feel itself destined for some more than ordinary fate. These feelings, joined with a strong degree of bashfulness, made her shrink from the gaze which always followed her when she left her home. She was inclined to ascribe solely to the remarkable appearance of her dress, the tributary looks of admiration which were paid to her uncommon beauty. Her white costume, no doubt, attracted observation, but it was never until the eyes of the beholders had lost the view of her lovely face, and then became rivited on the symmetry of her light form, that the snowy robes which enfolded it and the auxiliary parts of her dress, possessed the least attraction. Her repugnance to be stared at kept her entirely from the town of Rouen. She never could be persuaded to go to visit the widowed Madame Bignon (to whom, as we shall see, she became an object of much interest) from the period which followed her twelfth year; but her fame had been established all through this ancient city, which often heard, as well as her immediate neighborhood, the praises of the incomparable *Voüee au Blanc*.

While she thus fostered in childhood all the natural romance of her disposition, to which seclusion and piety afforded such constant food, another feeling was growing fast in her mind, that gave it still a more powerful bias as womanhood began to ripen. Mr. Mowbray, the worthy Philadelphian merchant had, in the regular correspondence

which followed his return to America, invariably contrived to include the name of Leonie; and by many little presents and continual kind messages, kept up, as she fancied at least, a glimmering recollection of his person, since the day of his short visit at the Vale of the Three Villages. But connected with this notion, true or false, there was the association of another individual, who, though unseen, except in the wandering clouds of her imagination, had in a most extraordinary manner blended with all her youthful thoughts and feelings. This was Edward, the only son of Mr. Mowbray, to whom the reader may remember his casual allusion during the before-mentioned visit, and of whom the father never failed to say something or other in his letters. It was curious enough to see, as I have seen, the bill of lading of so many bales of cotton, or a letter of advice of a bill of exchange, wound up with a postscript to the following effect, "Edward sends his love to his little wife:" or "kiss Leonie for me twenty times," and so forth—always written by the father's hand, but confirmed in various ways, from the unmeaning scrawl of a boy of five or six years of age, to the pot-hook-and-hanger signature of a youth of eight or ten, then the cramped little attempt at running hand, and finally the well-cut letters of the name Edward Mowbray. Leonie used to gaze at these epistles with delighted eyes, even before she could understand them; and when she fairly learned to read and know her own language, she often wished Mr. Mowbray wrote better French, or that Edward would learn the language for himself. She always answered these mementoes of Transatlantic gallantry on little slips of paper, written by Mr. Suberville, and signed by her, in short sentences of friendly import; but just previously to her attaining her fifteenth year, (an important epoch of her life, and at which I have chosen to introduce her to the full-grown acquaintance of my readers,) she was struck with the idea of learning English. A sort of lurking hope that was in some way or other linked with the idea of Edward Mowbray, was certainly the first incitement of this design. It was, however, very natural to the disposition which she possessed in a strong degree for the attainment of knowledge. Her studies had been hitherto limited to her own language, which she had thoroughly learned under the care of a dully governess who attended her, from Rouen; the elementary branches of general education, music, drawing, and of course dancing, in all of which she made such progress as might be expected from a girl of more than ordinary talents. But no sooner had she conceived the desire of acquiring the English tongue, than she hastened to communicate it to Mr. and Madame Suberville, with an order that shewed them the inclination must be indulged. Consent was immediately given; and in order to put her wishes into execution, application for aid was immediately forwarded to a person of so much importance to the sequel of my story, that I really must do him the honor of opening a new chapter with the announcement of his name.

CHAPTER IV.

Monsieur Hippolite Emmanuel Narcisse de Chouffleur was an offshoot from one of those ancient and noble families, which, had I at hand a blood-hound of heraldry, I might perhaps succeed in tracing back to the most dismal depths of the dark ages. This gentleman was a hereditary royalist, a prating, busy, and empty-pated fellow, who had owed the good luck of keeping his head on his shoulders in the stormy seas of the revolution, merely to the lightness of the freight it carried. He floated on the waters like the buoy of an anchor, and just served to denote the grounds where his family had fixed, and where the privateers that were then abroad might find safe harborage and shelter. Persecution and confiscation had driven all the other individuals of his race far from their native land, and left him penniless. His whole possessions on the establishment of the republic, consisted in some half-dozen sky-blue, pea-green, and rose-colored coats; about twenty pair of nankin breeches; a large quantity of ruffles, with shirts and frills in the proportion of one of the first to every dozen of the latter; some silk stockings, snuff boxes, pastebuckles, rings and brooches; and a satin-wood casket, containing sundry patents of nobility, marriage articles, grants of estates and other proofs of gentle blood, legitimacy and feudal rights. With this stock of merchandize, Mons. de Chouffleur, or as he was more familiarly called, Mons. Hippolite, commenced his trade of emigrant, knight-errant, fortune hunter, and *soi-disant* marquis. After buzzing and bustling about his native Normandy for some years following the annihilation of such pretensions as were his only inheritance, he determined to expatriate himself to the hospitable shores of Great Britain; and as his stay in his own country had attracted no attention, so did his departure meet with no difficulty. He landed from a fishing boat at Brighton, in a miserable plight; told a long lying story of misfortunes, imprisonment and escape; was warmly received by some honest John Bull; remained two years or more in our island, acquiring a marvellously insufficient knowledge of the language, and a perfect taste for roast beef; and having supported himself by his skill in dancing, which no native teacher could compete with, and upheld his claims to the title of marquis by appeals to his satin-wood casket, which no one would take the trouble to examine, he availed himself of the first amnesty granted by Napoleon, and returned to look after the remnants of his family inheritance, which he protested most solemnly were buried somewhere adjacent to the site of the three villages.

His re-appearance excited some surprise and a good deal of amusement. People laughed at his impudence as well as his other manifold risible qualities. He never discovered his treasures, and soon squandered the little savings which he had amassed with English industry, to dispose of with the improvidency by no means peculiar to

his countrymen. He was as litigious as any one in Normandy; and having made an acquaintance with François Faussecopie, who was all things unto all men, he employed him to make searches into the innumerable intricacies of the revolutionary decrees, to find out some pretexts for law-suits, to recover rights which no one had ever heard of but from him. All the assiduity of his counsellor could not, however, succeed, even in Normandy, to muster up one possible cause for litigation; and poor Monsieur Hippolite found himself reduced to the sad necessity of becoming a teacher of English to such of the gentry in Rouen and its neighborhood as would condescend to hold communion, even through the pages of a grammar, with the deeply-hated nation whose language was considered as barbarous as itself was odious. To carry his project into effect, he gave up his wanderings about the country, and fixed himself in a little chamber on the fourth story of one of the oldest houses in one of the narrowest streets of Rouen. To attract the passers-by, and give publicity to his design, a little black board hung suspended by a string from his casement, and dangling down as far as the top panes of the shop window below, showed in printed characters at one side, the following words:

"Run of the English tongue, by Mister Chouffeur, he gives the partickler Lessons. To address oneself to the professor, who rests in the Fourth."

At the reverse side was the following translation for the benefit of the country gentlemen, I suppose, and explaining the somewhat ambiguous meaning of the original to those even who understood English.

"Cours de langue Anglaise, par M. de Chouffeur. Il donne des Leçons Particulieres. S'adresser au professeur, qui reste au Quatrième."

This tempting announcement had certainly taken some persons in—not only to the house, but in other ways as may be supposed. Nothing was ever more absurd than the jumble of trash which this professor taught his pupils; and as the limited knowledge of our language which existed in France before the peace was almost entirely acquired from some such source, we need not wonder at our first visitors to Paris having been obliged to request that their French friends would translate their English greetings, to make them comprehensible. In this way, however Monsieur Hippolite got his livelihood, and having no competitors, at least none less ignorant than himself, he became in a few years very celebrated among the learned men of Rouen and its vicinage.

But there was another language which he piqued himself on knowing still better than English—the language of pangs, palpitations, sighs and blushes, in short—the language of love. This he protested he had first acquired by inspiration, and afterwards perfected by study. He was most profound in this particular branch of philology; could trace the root of all the young blossomings of the tender pas-

sion ; tell what particular parts of its speech should stand-alone or require support ; conjugate every one of its auxiliary or most irregular symptoms ; and decline with readiness every one of its verbal adjuncts,—except those which might take the shape of invitations to breakfast, dinner or supper.

This language he taught gratis ; and the generosity with which he lavished his lessons was unbounded. Maid, wife, and widow, were alike the objects of his voluntary services ; but he repeatedly declared that the tongue of love (*la langue d'amour*) was little suited to the palate of the females of Normandy, for it was notorious that not one of them, of any age or degree, would listen beyond the first five minutes to his lectures.

Monsieur Hippolite thought this most unaccountable. He frequently looked at himself in the glass from head to foot, and could see no physical cause of failure. To accomplish this favorite employment, he was obliged to stand on a chair ; and it was while he was in the laudable exercise of this self-examination on a sharp frosty Sunday morning, after a recent rebuff from the wife of his landlord, that the old woman servant who attended him put a billet into his hands, signifying that “Mademoiselle Leonie Suberville would feel honored by the attendance of M. de Choufleur at the Valley, for the purpose of commencing a course of instruction in the English language.”

His raptures on the perusal of these lines were unbounded. To give a loose to his delight, he unbuttoned his shirt-collar, turned out the old woman, locked the door, threw himself into his arm-chair, read the billet over a thousand times, and having finally (as was declared by his neighbour in the opposite garret) exhausted himself by every extravagant expression of his transports, he tied the note round with a piece of pink ribbon, and, fastening it to the inside of his waistcoat close over his heart, he re-adjusted his dress, and prepared to set out for the residence of Mr. Suberville. While we suppose him employed in his three quarters of an hour's walk, we may devote about the same proportion of a chapter to account for his delight and some circumstances connected with it.

He had, in common with the chief part of the gossiping population of Rouen, often heard of the bewitching beauty, talents, and romantic turn of the *Vouée au Blanc*. Being quite convinced that in every one of these three respects he formed a perfect parallel to this young creature, he felt an inspirations, as he said, that impelled him quite irresistibly to throw himself in her way, and give their mutual sympathies a fair chance of coming into contact. For this purpose he had made many ineffectual attempts to get acquainted with Mr. Suberville, and at last about three months previous to the reception of Leonie's billet, he had taken the plan of regularly attending, every Sunday morning, at the earliest celebration of mass, in the little church close to Mr. Suberville's dwelling, where Madame and her adopted daughter were punctually seen offering up their matin orisons.

In this solemn, though humble sanctuary, did the already enamoured Hippolite first catch a view of the object of his passion.

Covered in a cloak of white satin, trimmed with white fur, a white bonnet on her head, and a long white veil concealing her lovely face, a pair of white cloth shoes with white bindings peeping out like little rabbits from under her robe, Leonie tripped along the aisle beside her mamma one November morning, when De Chouffeur, who had taken his station in a favorable position, thought that he saw the embodied spirit of his inspiration approaching towards him. His agitation was excessive; and, added to the coldness of the morning and a thin covering, made him tremble from head to foot; while his heart kept fluttering and flapping against his ribs.

Madame Suberville and Leonie, quite unobservant of their observer, walked forward to their usual station at the left-hand side of the altar, where the priest had not yet appeared. They knelt softly down; and, as Leonie was preparing to open her little red-covered prayer-book, she was startled by the noise of something falling on the steps at the opposite side, and upon looking towards the place, observed the figure of a stranger in a kneeling posture directly before her, his eyes fixed on her, and his hands held up in the gesture of supplication. This was no other than De Chouffeur, whose emotions had been going on from their pit-a-pat pace, when he first saw Leonie glide into the church, into regular gradations of trot, canter, and gallop, until they so far overpowered him on her taking the posture of prayer, that, yielding to the invisible sympathy which regulated his movements by hers, he dropped down upon his knees, with an abruptness that caused the sound which so surprised her.

Her first impulse when her eye caught his figure, was to burst into a loud laugh; but respect for the sacred scene of the adventure quickly countermanded that temptation, and she was forced to a restrained and smothering kind of hysteric, which required her utmost efforts to keep within bounds. Madame Suberville, buried in the depth of her devotions, had neither eyes nor ears for what was passing round her; but to justify our heroine's apparent levity, I must give my readers a short, slight sketch of Monsieur Hippolite's appearance and costume, as she saw it at this period.

He was in the first place precisely five feet and an inch in height, and, being then somewhat turned of forty, it was commonly believed that he had acquired his complete growth. There was no proportion between the length and thickness, either of the whole person or of its component parts, and geographically described, it would not offer a favorable specimen of man's fair proportion. The head leaning forward like a promontory, was large and long, the body showed like a great continent long and thick, the isthmus neck was at once short and slender, the arms reached nearly to the knees, and the thighs and legs were appallingly stout and muscular. An elevation and protuberance of his right shoulder gave to what nature meant for its fellow, the air of a very distant correspondence, and caused him when in action to proceed with that movement best defined by the military phrase *en echelon*. The only good parts were the well-turned ancles and the diminutive and prettily formed feet, and they were surmounted by a pair of calves, whose Herculean dimensions seemed to threaten on the least exertion to burst their seams, that is to say, the seams of the old darned silk stockings, whose natural

white was blended with the yellow leaf of time, and the powder blue of the washerwoman. The face was of a peculiar nature. It was not actually ugly, but particularly droll. The forehead slanted back directly from the eye-brows, the nose advanced beyond the utmost verge of the aquiline. The eyes, of light blue, followed the nose with dreadful strainings, and stood far out of their sockets; white eye-brows, and lids unlashd, offered no relief to this unnatural projection; and the small mouth and chin sloping inwards, precisely in the same ratio with the forehead, gave a grey-hound sort of look to the whole physiognomy. The hair, naturally flaxen, was short and curled, and filled with powder and pomatum; the cheeks were ruddy, and covered in part with an amber colored down, that formed a perfect caricature of whiskers on each.

A reverential regard for the antiquity of family relics, and a natural love of finery made M. Hippolite not only preserve those which remained to him, but carry them on his person on all occasions. He wore rings, and brooches, and buckles, in enormous profusion, and he had through all the changes of his latter life contrived to keep one dress suit formed out of the remains of his ancient wardrobe. On the present occasion, he had all his treasures on his back and other appropriate parts. His one last pair of silk stockings have been already mentioned. The garments next in order, formed of what once looked nankin, now wore the semblance of very ill-washed white calico, and his waistcoat was silk that had been originally a bright violet, but was now washed into the hue of the outer edge of an expiring rainbow; and, saying nothing of the cravat or frill, and less than nothing of the mysterious garment to which they formed appendages, I may notice the ancient rose-colored coat, which had been long since dyed, first a brilliant purple, and afterwards the most sombre shade of black. Monsieur Hippolite's former profession of dancing master had a much more bracing effect on the muscular expansion of his preposterous calves, than on the nervous system of his thread-bare coat. It was reduced to the very shadow of a shade; and the many hues imprinted upon it during its various changes, gave to it a chameleon-colored mixture that had a most extraordinary effect, as its flimsy texture was sported with by the various accidents of light and shade.

Such was the man, take him for all in all, as he burst upon the astonished gaze of Leone. It is not necessary to dwell on his emotions nor her amusement, following in weekly revolutions for the three months succeeding this portentous interview. De Chonfleur had actually worked himself into a sort of belief that he was fairly in love, and the innocent object of his delusion was so pleased with the ludicrous exhibition which he presented every Sabbath morning, that he used to gaze on his figure, to the manifest ruffling of those pious thoughts and sedate looks so appropriate to the place he appeared in. Madame Suberville could not avoid remarking his constant attendance at Mass. It gave her a very good opinion of him, and she readily assented to Mr. Suberville's suggestion that he should be Leone's teacher of English. Leone was enchanted with the nomination, and it gave a fresh zest to the pleasure which she looked forward to in her new studies.

CHAPTER V.

De Chouffleur's thoughts slipped on as smoothly as his feet, while he slid along the frosty road towards the vale. His mind participated in the elasticity of his nerves, and his hopes swelled big and giant-like, in sympathy with the sinews of his calves. He was convinced that love had at last set the spark to that long train of well directed looks, and passionate contortions of face and carcase, which he had so skilfully prepared for explosion in the deep chambers of Leonie's heart. He congratulated himself over and over again, that he had not even strove by any premature effort to force himself upon her, nor done any thing to thwart the effect of his deep design; and just as he got close to Mr. Suberville's house, he was forced to lean against a little projection, and stop awhile to take breath, to prepare himself for the coming meeting.

The time he had lost in raptures over the note of invitation, had completely prevented his usual attendance at the morning service, and given Madame Suberville and Leonie so far the start of him, that they had returned home and breakfasted before he reached the house. Leonie by no means expected his appearance, so promptly following her summons. She was therefore not a little surprised to see his well-known figure sloping down by the course of the little rivulet, and sliding across the glassy surface of the irrigated bleach green. She could scarcely restrain herself from laughing outright; but knowing that Monsieur Hippolite stood high in the good graces of her mamma, on the score of his piety, she had always abstained, in her presence, from any expression which might make him an object of ridicule. And it may be well to premise in this place, that her innocent mind had never imagined any cause for his assiduous attentions at church, but those which piety might afford. She had frequently laughed and talked about him to Alfred Suberville, the son of the deceased captain, who was her constant confidant when she had any secret joke to communicate relative to Dr. Glautte, or any other subject appertaining to the ludicrous. I may here mention that this cousin, as she in courtesy called him, was, in pursuance of the plans of his designing mother eternally hovering about Leonie, her Lover by anticipation, and in right of her the future inheritor of his uncle's wealth. He was a good-tempered careless youth, and liked Leonie very well, without either loving her or being loved. He was at the valley on the morning in question; and he espied, at the same moment as she, the florid face of De Chouffleur, blooming through the mist sent up by his breath into the frosty air. The forced efforts at decorum of this young couple were contrasted with the bustling preparations for a welcome reception made by the old lady, and the quiet gravity of Mr. Suberville, who sat reading his newspaper, resolved to take no notice of the visitor announced by Alfred, whose reputation had long been obnoxious to his contempt.

After an awful note of preparation, sounded through the fragile texture of a cambric muslin pocket-handkerchief, and reiterated scrapings of the soles of the shoes, with a couple of hems! pronounced in a tone something between a cough and the neighing of a horse—the door opened, and the servant's uttering recapitulation of the names of Monsieur de Chouffleur was followed by the entrance of their lawful owner. True to the observance of his former and present professions, he had prepared both his first attitude and his opening speech. He accordingly stopped at the edge of the door, placed his feet in the third position, gracefully put his little cocked hat under his arm, squared his right wrist and elbow, and just touched his left side with the tips of his thumb and fore finger. Thus arranged, and throwing his eyes round the room, he began, "Gentlemen and Ladies!"—when Madame Suberville, rising and advancing towards him, cut short the thread of his discourse with "good morning, Sir: I am very happy indeed to receive a gentleman so distinguished, as well for his knowledge of foreign languages, as for his attendance on the duties of his religion. Pray give yourself the trouble to walk in; this is my husband, sir, and that my nephew, and yonder sits my daughter, sir, your future pupil."

"Ah, Madame!" sighed the amorous Hippolite, rather confused by the abrupt impediment made in his speech, but utterly overwhelmed by this actual introduction to Leonie, "ah, Madame! I know *her* already."

Mr. Suberville just raised his eyes above the margin of the newspaper, and bowed his head slightly to De Chouffleur. The plaintive tone of his voice and his theatrical languishment of look, appeared excessively ridiculous; but as it was the first time Mr. Suberville had heard him speak, he took it for granted they were connected with his every-day manner, and resuming his reading for a moment or two, he shortly rose and quitted the room.

Alfred, who had continually quizzed Leonie about de Chouffleur's church-going, and assured her (without knowing any thing more than his general character) that she had made a conquest of him, was instantaneously convinced that such was the fact. He therefore replied to the long-drawn sigh of acknowledgment which followed Madame Suberville's introduction, "Ay, Mr. de Chouffleur, and she knows you, I assure you. Many a time she has told me of your being at church together."

"What goodness!" cried Hippolite with ardor; "and has Mademoiselle had the kindness to give the least of her attention to the humblest and most devoted of her servants?"

This was addressed to Leonie direct, and in a tone which was meant as the very deepest key of the passionate and pathetic. Leonie, who was really ashamed of the earnest gaze he fixed on her, and unable any longer to keep her countenance, blushed the deepest shade of scarlet, and stuffing her handkerchief into her mouth, turned to the window to conceal her confusion and enjoy her laugh.

De Chouffleur seeing the blush, and unconscious of its accompaniment, attributed the whole to the cause which he considered the right one; but held his tongue firmly between his teeth, afraid to commit

himself by the utterance of the delight with which he was burning.

Alfred, who amply enjoyed the scene, immediately exclaimed to Madame Suberville, "come along, my dear aunt; let us leave Leonie and Monsieur de Chouffleur to commence their studies. I see they are anxious to be alone."

"The sooner the better," said Madame: "when affairs of instruction are to be arranged, there is nothing like leaving master and pupil together, where the age and respectability of the former are guarantees for the safety of the latter.—Is it not so, Monsieur de Chouffleur?"

"Ah, Madame!" sighed de Chouffleur.

"Now my dear child," continued Madame Suberville addressing Leonie, "pay every attention to what Mons. de Chouffleur says to you. You know how he merits your confidence."

"Oh!" murmured Hippolite.

"You need not fear her being negligent," added the garrulous dame turning to him: "she is most favorably disposed to listen to you, believe me—"

"I am penetrated, Madame!"

"And trust me that no girl of her age is readier at learning by heart."

"It is too much!" cried De Chouffleur, in infinite agitation, as Alfred led his aunt out of the room and shut the door. Leonie had stood some time fixed in the recess of the window, not daring to turn round. At length she heard the door close, and knew she was alone with her instructor. That consideration immediately brought her feelings to a proper level, and with a blended graciousness and composure she looked at De Chouffleur, and begged him to take a chair. It was lucky for him that she possessed this prompt sense of her own propriety, for had she waited one minute longer he would have been down on his knees on the cambric muslin handkerchief, which he was preparing to spread out for the protection of his nankin knee-covers.

Her calmness and dignity chilled him like an icicle, for he had not only believed Madame Suberville and the cousin to have been paving the way, as it were, for his avowal, but supposed her to be melting in the warmth of a tender confusion. He therefore stared at her still, but with a contraction of mouth and brow that spoke unutterable things. She repeated her invitation that he would be seated, as she was already; upon which he took a chair with a most automaton-like air; and, uttering a deep-breathed "ah, ah, ah!" he dropped down almost unconsciously upon it.

Leonie proposed that they should commence the business which brought them together, and, he, recovering by degrees his presence of mind, drew forth from his pocket a grammar of the English tongue. As he placed it on the table it opened, like a self-impelled oracle, at the verb "to love." Hippolite thought that this little incident was guided by the finger of Destiny, and he caught with amazing quickness a great portion of his former tender and sanguine flow of feelings. He seized the book, and pointing to the propitious word, he threw a languishing look on Leonie, and repeated the first, second, and third persons of the verb in its indicative mood. His ac-

cent and tone are not to be given in print, but his pronunciation was as thus :—

Hi loaf!!—Vee loaf!!!

Dow loafest!!—Yeu loaf!!

Ee loafs!—Day loaf!

The respective marks of admiration are meant to denote the varying emphasis which accompanied his utterance of each expression. For the tone and manner, I think they must have beggared description.

After a little time lost in this gentle foolery, Leonie, who of course did not understand a word of what he said, requested he would give her a task to perform, and he, struck by a momentary thought, told her he invariably began with his pupils by making them write down a few sentences in English and repeat those exercises daily, to give them a familiarity with the appearance of the words, and for other purposes of instruction which he would explain as she advanced. She accordingly took from her nice little writing box, (which was a present of Mr. Suberville's on her last fete day) pen, ink and paper, and in her delicate hand wrote as follows, by his dictation, the orthography of many of the words being guided by his pronunciation.

"My deer how I am glad to make you nolledge! It give me some of the pleasure more than I oan you tell. You ar one man much amiable. You ar the gentlemann perfect, complete, and the best bred. I live on loaf! my brest burn like one oven, and I kiss you with my hart!"

To this *Exercise* he made her add her name, and folding it up in the form of a letter, he carefully put it in his pocket. Then, as if urged by some violent hurry, he took his leave, promising to come again the following day; and to remove all doubts which might be suggested as to the cause of his speed, I beg to say that it was merely for the gratification of an extraordinary vanity, which made him fly from the house to gaze upon the unintended love-letter, and voluntarily deceive himself with the fancy that it was really the dictation of Leonie's own heart.

He continued his attendance some weeks, but was always kept at a proper distance by the decorous bearing of his pupil, who, young as she was, had good sense enough to see the necessity of a very determined and repressive manner towards him. Her progress in English was, as may be supposed, most imperfect. The greatest difficulty presented to her naturally acute mind, was the lamentable ignorance of her teacher, and she soon discovered his incompetence. She nevertheless saw the necessity of some assistance to help her through the morass of our incomprehensible pronunciation, and though she found that she could learn the principles of the language with her grammar and her dictionary, she thought she must have floundered on in ignorance for ever if she did not avail herself of Monsieur de Choudéur's acquaintance with the sounds of the harsh-looking consonantal words. Hippolite told her that in this branch he was perfect; and she taking his assertion, not quite for granted, but for better for worse, they continued to jog forward together. He was wonderfully cautious as to any expression of his passion at

which her delicacy might take the alarm. Quite satisfied with being so frequently in her presence, he took ample revenge for the reserve she imposed on herself in speech, by making her unconsciously express, in writing, sentiments the most extravagant and ridiculous. He kept her for several days to her constant task of English exercises, as he continued to call them, until he saw she was beginning to understand enough of the language to make him fear her comprehending the scandalous nonsense he put into her pen. His manoeuvring then ceased, but he had acquired ten or a dozen of those precious productions, and I may as well give my readers here another specimen, of the existence of which I myself, long afterwards, obtained ocular proof.

"Nite and day, m-rning and after twelve o'clock, my thotes are at thee. In the shurah or at the walk, in the deep mystrees of sove sleep, or in the full day, it is thou my deer who art before my ise, thy head bended all ways by the halter, where I burn to be tied to thee without even the ceremony of being corded by my relations.—Beleeve mee untill the deth, thee very loafly. LEONIE."

"My cousin Alfred makes the galows, but I thee promise I will marry myself with thee as soon as my wishes are dead."

I have already said that De Chouffeur's intention in making Leonie write the first of these effusions was merely for his private gratification; but no sooner had he possessed himself two of or three, than his egregious vanity and folly made him conceive the idea of showing them to a few select friends, in proof of his having succeeded in gaining her affections. He therefore turned his thoughts on Fausscopie, and felt that it would be a fine triumph over his incredulity regarding Hippolite's powers of pleasing, to show him under Leonie's own hand several *billets-doux*, which being written in a foreign language, have a sufficient proof of there being something meant for secrecy—and what so likely as confessions of love? But he was too well aware of Fausscopie's shrewdness, not to feel it necessary to wait a reasonable time for his pupil's acquirement of the language in which he was to prove her having written, and he was forced to keep his intended revelation *in petto* until he was very near being obliged to abandon his design altogether.

Leonie, who labored night and day at the new study which seemed to her romantic mind to contract the expanse of ocean that sep-

*It would be no doubt an act of supererogation to explain away all the mistakes of those letters. It may, however, be well to translate this last one into French, such as Monsieur Hippolite afterwards declared it was meant for.

"Nuit et jour, matin et soir, mes pensees sont a toi. Dans l'Eglise ou a la promenade, dans les mysteres du sommeil ou en plein jour, c'est toi mon cher qui es devant mes yeux, et tu te toujours inclinee aupres de l'autel, ou je brule de t'être unie, sans meme la Ceremonie de t'être accordee par mes parons. Crois moi jusqu'a la mort ta tres affectionnee, LEONIE."

Mon cousin Alfred fait le jaloux; mais je te promets de me marier avec toi aussitot que mes vœux seront expires.

arated her from Edward Mowbray, caught now and then a word or phrase in her forced exercises which seemed to her of very doubtful import. Her own mis-spelling of Hippolite's false pronunciation defied detection in many instances by means of the dictionary, but still she thought it odd that he deferred from day to day putting her to the translation of those scraps, which she observed him to keep with such great care, and to fold up always in the form of letters. She spoke to him on the subject, but at first got vague answers, as to her not being yet fit for entering on that particular branch of his method of instruction; but one expression which he dictated to her about a fortnight after the commencement of his lessons, bore so evidently a local and amorous meaning, that she refused to write it, to his very great confusion. Taking advantage of this, she peremptorily demanded that he should produce on the following day the whole collection of exercises, that she might re-examine them, and begin her task of translating, if it was ever to be done. De Chouffleur recovered himself, pondered all that evening on the subject, and the next morning produced his bundle, containing, as she supposed, the whole of those important documents. She had not the least memory of the words of those earliest written, and was quite unsuspecting as to the number produced; so seizing the packet from the table where Monsieur Hippolite placed it, she flung it into the fire, and saw it in a moment consumed to ashes. Her pleasure on this occasion was equalled by Monsieur Hippolite's, for he had begun to feel a little awkward on the subject, and had himself conceived the plan of burning the exercises in Leonie's presence; having first safely secreted in his satin-wood casket, and placed at the bottom of his old hairy trunk at home, the two tender epistles which I have already copied for the reader.

He could scarcely restrain his joy, when he saw Leonie's own fair hand relieve him from all inquietude relative to the consumed or the existing writings; and he did not even put on a semblance of ill-humor. Leonie was pleased at this; for she thought her proceeding would have given him offence; and his forbearance afforded her the most favourable view she had yet had of his temper and disposition.

CHAPTER VI.

Events of a most momentous nature were now about to burst on the fortunes and the fate of our heroine and her friends; or, as she *did*, and we *might*, call them, her parents. Sudden changes from wealth to penury, from influence to nothingness, from what the world believes respectability, to what it miscalls disgrace, are too frequent to be wondered at even in the pages of a romance. Let no one, therefore, marvel that one of these shiftings in the scenes of life should have been exhibited by the family, into whose bosom I have

been introducing my readers, long before I got a footing there myself. I never knew them in their prosperity, yet I heartily mourned over the recital of their misfortunes, and the accident from which they arose.

It was on a fine clear morning, in the month of March, 1811, that Mr. Suberville received from Rouen a large consignment of raw cotton for the use of the manufactory. Mr. Mowbray's letter, which contained the particulars, and which should have announced its coming, had been detained by some accident, and therefore a proper arrangement for the reception of the cotton could not be made in the very few days which elapsed, from the arrival of the ship and the discharge of the cargo at Rouen. Mr. Suberville was in consequence obliged to stow away in every possible part of the factory and warehouses, and even in the garrets and waste rooms of his dwelling, the packages and bales. This business occupied the greater part of the day, and although the indefatigable master staid up the whole night to guard against mishaps, he could not be every where, nor secure from the negligence of others. A tired and careless workman left a lighted candle in a dangerous position. The family having, as they thought, taken every measure of security, went to bed; the flames burst out; they defied all the efforts of the neighbourhood to extinguish them. Insurance offices against fire were then unknown in France; and the next morning Mr. Suberville, his wife and family, were without house, or factory, or fortune—utterly ruined.

Utter ruin, like all other phrases the signification of which has a retrospective application, must be taken in relation to former circumstances, and means here *comparative* ruin. Mr. Suberville was not reduced to beggary; for, on winding up his accounts, which, to his accurate and cool mind, was, even in his circumstances, a short task, he found that his long savings in trade would pay all his creditors, and leave him a sum producing about one hundred pounds sterling yearly interest. His chief wealth, being his factory and its machinery, with his valuable house and its contents, was lost beyond redemption.

In the shelter offered to him and his family in the residence of his next neighbor, and even in sight of the blackened and smoking walls of the factory where he had made his fortune, and of the dwelling where he had so long enjoyed it,—even there he arranged the whole statement of his affairs, with a composure and promptness almost incredible. He took this cruel blow with the serenity which always passes for philosophy, but which is not always entitled to that sublime epithet. There is a constitutional stillness of feeling, which, though it do not degenerate into actual stagnation, approaches it in some men very nearly. A mind buried among the bleak and barren heights of commercial calculations, may be compared to a lake embosomed in lofty mountains, which throw at once their shelter and their shadow upon its surface. Emotions flutter round the one, as the winds blow round the other, but both rest unruffled by the blast. These exceptions to the general course of humanity and nature are, in themselves, as rare as they are unlovely; and we seldom see, in our species, or in our travels, a mind or a lake so thoroughly isolated,

that some opening is not to be found for the charities of life or the airs of heaven. This opening in the mind of Mr. Suberville was formed by his affection for Leonie, for he loved this adopted daughter fully as well as if she had been his own. Beyond that attachment he had no strong feelings of the heart. He was a man of unyielding probity, of a strict sense of honor, of great decorum of manners and conduct; but he had none of the softnesses of nature. He long loved his brother—as well as any other man; and when they quarrelled he disliked him as much—no more. He had many friends, but not one friendship. He was utterly insensible to the warmth, the enthusiasm, the *extravagance* (if we may speak truly) implied in that word. He had often conferred benefits, but never inspired a feeling of gratitude. If he offered the warm cup of hospitality to his guests, he was sure in the sequel to dash it with ice. If he lent money, he lent it with an air of coldness. If he refused it, the refusal was softened down by no expression of regret. If the debt were paid, he put the money in his pocket. If lost, he drove the transaction from his mind.

A man like this can never inspire general affection, but he may excite a great deal of regard. Probity and judgment are qualities so valuable, that the world passes over in their favor many defects in what are called feelings of the heart, and seems to consider the misfortunes of their possessors as so many special acts of injustice on the part of Fate; while many men give their sympathy to such sufferers as a sort of propitiation to destiny to keep the evil from themselves. It was on this principle, no doubt, at least in a great measure, that on the second day after the fatal fire, a deputation from the chief merchants of Rouen, many of them creditors of Mr. Suberville, came out to offer him pecuniary assistance to any amount, even to the full extent of repairing all his losses, and establishing him again completely. He was struck by this generous proof of esteem, but it failed to move him; and he calmly refused it on the score of his declining age, which unfitted him at once for the renewed exertion of trade, and for bearing the burden of so weighty an obligation.

While Leonie, who was present at this scene, reflected on Mr. Suberville's conduct, he broke the seal of a letter which was just put into his hands. "Ah," said he, glancing over it, and throwing it on the table, "it is too late!" Leonie looked at it, and saw it was from Mr. Mowbray. A rush of pleasure seemed to fill her heart, which a moment before had felt like a void. She asked permission to look at it. Mr. Suberville nodded a silent assent, and she read the postscript.

"Je pense toujours mama chere petite Leonie, et j'espere de faire sa connoissance un jour.
EDWARD MOWBRAY."

"Ah, my dear papa," cried Leonie, her eyes filling with tears once more, and her cheeks flushed with pleasure, "ah, here at all events is a friend that loves you, and will sympathize with us. I don't speak of Edward—I was not thinking of him at all—I mean Mr. Mowbray—now you don't suppose I meant the son?"

"How could you, my dear, when he does not know you? You

give me a supposition which I could not have conceived, so take care, my dear child, think before you speak always."

"So I do, papa; and I think, and will say that Mr. Mowbray will immediately write to you like a warm-hearted, generous friend, making just the same kind offers as the Rouen merchants, only doing it in a way that will more strongly prove his affection."

"We shall see," was the reply; and Leonie then went to visit Madame Suberville, who had never quitted her bed since the fire, but was constantly attended by Doctor Glautte, and by getting daily worse, proving the intimate connection between cause and effect. Mr Suberville sat down on the spot to reply to Mr Mowbray, to countermand a fresh order which he had lately sent for another supply of cotton, and to announce at once the payment of the bills for the last unlucky consignment, and the misfortune of which it was the cause.

His next occupation was to write officially to the government, stating briefly his change of circumstances, and requesting, in consequence, that he might be permitted to resign his office of mayor, in favor of some one more suited to maintain it with distinction. This business being arranged, he paid a visit to his wife's apartment, took Glautte aside, and communicated to him, as his coadjutor, the step he had taken, and then went early to the Bureau to sign some papers, and see that Faussecopie took no advantage of the posture of his affairs to play any tricks. As he left the Bureau again, to make final arrangements for a new residence and future measures, he met Glautte, walking less slowly than usual towards the place he came from. There was something he thought very unusual in that, and still more in the air of the doctor's countenance, which was something at once brisk and abstracted, but the latter expression preponderated so much, that he passed Mr. Suberville in the narrow street of the village without seeing him, and marched straight into the house where the Bureau was held, without ever once striking (as was his wont) his cane in a pestlelike motion against the ground, to give a mingled official and professional notice of his coming.

As Mr. Suberville walked towards his temporary home, Glautte entered the little room where Faussecopie was writing, and having carefully closed the door, put his cane in a corner, seated himself, and having taken a pinch of snuff, and condescendingly offered another to the wily clerk, he cautiously, in a half whisper, informed him of Mr. Suberville's resignation of his office. This was a matter of surprise and great joy to Faussecopie, for the uncompromising integrity and sleepless energy of the mayor had been long a heart-rending check on his passion for malpractice. Glautte expressed to him his certainty that Mr. Benoit, a neighbor of Mr. Suberville's, would be appointed his successor, and his object was now to consult with his friend Francois on the best means of coming round that gentlemen so as to secure his own confirmation in the office of adjoint.

Faussecopie, with his usual acuteness, saw, in an instant glance, all the advantages to be made of the present state of affairs. There never was a man so perfectly suited to be an instrument in the hands

of such a knave as was our friend Dr. Glautte; and Faussecopie's immediate notion was to make him apply to be himself appointed successor to Mr. Suberville, making the prospective engagement to reward his adviser with the situation of adjoint. Here he knew he would be most fully his superior's master, and without any hesitation he developed his proposal. Glautte was quite "*flambe*" (to use his favorite phrase) at this startling proposition. His ambition, or self-confidence, had never soared so high. He hemmed, and hawed, and hesitated, and rolled his eyes, while Faussecopie, not heeding his embarrassment, sketched a petition to the minister of the interior, which, in addition to the notorious lie that Glautte had for years performed the duties of the office, threw a sort of side-winded imputation on Mr. Suberville's present capability, couched in the language of regret at his friend's misfortune having seriously affected his health, and robbed him of the mental vigor for which he had been formerly distinguished. The petition ended with most overwhelming professions of homage and devotion to the emperor, his imperial and royal house and dynasty. Faussecopie thrust this up before the face of the bewildered doctor, whose eyes started forward, in their usual odd way when any thing roused him suddenly from a state of more than common stupidity. He read the sketch, and approved of it; and, by the desire of his adviser, he wrote in his least legible hand, a fair copy, which was put into the post office, and forwarded by the same courier that carried Mr. Suberville's proposal of resignation. No sooner was this first step taken, than Glautte believed himself possessed of all that it was meant to lead to; he held himself up twice as stiffly as before stamped his cane on the ground ten times as consequentially, put his solitary gold ear-ring forward with a more determined air, called Francois Faussecopie his best friend and the author of his elevation, dropped off from his visits to Madame Suberville, and treated with total neglect his old friend and steady benefactor. The immediate consequences arising from all this, were his former patient getting perfectly well, and his old patron being greatly disgusted.

This odious instance of dull ingratitude had a striking contrast in the volatile disinterestedness of De Chouffear. His first impulse on hearing of the destructive fire, while it yet raged the morning after its outbursting, was to jump out of bed in his shirt, and fly off "accoutred as he was" to the scene of action, with his imagination all full of flames, and shrieks, and ladders, buckets of water, incredible exertions, fainting fits, and—Leonie. But on a moment's reflection, he hastily equipped himself in his every day suit of brown camel, and hurried off to the Vale. As he approached it, he saw the appalling prospect of a conflagration by day-light; and that is the moment to witness such a scene in its most hideous aspect—when the splendid bursts of flame have no ground-work in the darkness of night, and do not clothe surrounding objects in tints of fantastic wildness; but when a dreary blaze is looking sickly in the brightness of morning, and the desolate ruin starting out in plain and harrowing deformity. Heaven knows how Monsieur Hippolite considered it, but for my own part I confess that a burning at night has

ever been to me an object of excitement rather than sorrow, while such a scene in day time always filled me with a just and heavy sense of the calamity.

Poor De Chouffeur was sadly grieved and grievously sad to learn that Leonie had already escaped—and, what was worse, that she had quietly walked out of the house by the kitchen door. "Oh," cried he, "that she had at least been flung senseless out of a garret window, and caught in a blanket or a feather-bed!" Undignified, however, as was the mode of her escape, he was still more hurt to find that he had not the least chance of seeing her. The gentleman in whose house she was sheltered, prohibited every attempt at disturbing her or Madame Suberville, and as for the husband, Hippolite never dared to venture to approach him in his calmest hours, but in a moment like that it was impossible. All that was left to him was to wander about the desolate premises all the day, and all the night too, searching among the cinders and rubbish for any little relic of Leonie's property, and happy beyond all expression at finding a silver thimble, a needle case, a half consumed shoe, and a ribbon sash (like all her habiliments, white) all of which he recognized with the sharpness of a lover's eye, as having formerly belonged to her. These he carefully collected and folded up in his cotton pocket handkerchief, ready to stow away in the depository of all his other valuables—the satin-wood casket. His great solitude about the burning house, and his frequent inquiries touched Mr. Suberville, who had not failed to observe his movements in the midst of all the bustle.

While Hippolite seemed taking a last lingering look at the gaping cavity which once contained the window of Leonie's room, and just as he prepared to set out for Rouen after four-and-twenty hours searching and fasting, Mr. Suberville, having looked for some moments on his woe-begone countenance, addressed him in a manner approaching something more towards cordiality than any thing Hippolite had ever received from him. The latter was too guileless to make the mistake that a more knowing fool would have infallibly made, and take Mr. Suberville's tone for the sound of an humbled spirit. Hippolite only heard the voice of Leonie's papa, and forgot all other circumstances in his joy. An invitation to come in and breakfast quite took away his appetite—for the moment. He accepted it with tears in his eyes, and tremblingly proposed that Mr. Suberville would "suffer him to continue his attendance on Mademoiselle Leonie, without any remuneration but the deep, deep, DEER happiness such service afforded him."

Mr. Suberville, never dreaming of the tender sentiments which urged on this generous offer, held out his hand to Hippolite, who seized upon it, and pressed it between both of his to his heart, as he entered the house with his inviter. On reaching the little room appropriated to the use of Mr. Suberville, and where Leonie was seated preparing his coffee, poor Hippolite could no longer contain his emotion. It burst through every sluice of feeling, and dropping down on his knees at Leonie's feet, he caught her hand, which he kissed with a frenzied air, sobbing and blubbering like a newly-whipped school-boy. Although the scene was the very acme of the la-

dicrous, neither Leonie nor Mr. Suberville could witness it without being affected, according to their various grades of sensibility. Our heroine could not smile any more than weep, but she begged Hippolite to rise, with expressions of heartfelt gratitude for his sympathy; while Mr. Suberville poured out a hot bowl of *café au lait*, and heaped a plate with huge slices of a large *saucisson*, which bore, he thought, a strong analogy to the fullness of De Choufleur's feelings, and formed the most appropriate relief to the emptiness of his stomach. The enraptured Hippolite had never felt so happy or so hungry. His appetite and his delight seemed both to return and to grow on what they fed on. He eat, and drank, and looked, and sighed, and ate and drank again; and to crown all, he was assured of continuing his lessons to Leonie, though not exactly on his own terms.

CHAPTER VII.

The preparations for Mr. Suberville's change of residence were soon completed. He hired a large and long-deserted house, which, with its surrounding paddock and dependencies, bore the name of Le Vallon, being situated down in the valley, at about a quarter of mile's distance from the village close to which he had lately lived. This house being the former residence of an emigrant nobleman, and in part dilapidated, was procured at a merely nominal rent; but several rooms were in a very good state, so that it was precisely suited to the wants of its new occupants. To furnish a French country house, is, in the best circumstances, an unexpensive affair to the proprietor, but in those of Mr. Suberville it cost little or nothing. A few rush-bottomed cherry-tree chairs, some walnut-wood tables, bedsteads of the same material, with the minor household matters of rough workmanship, and all bought in Rouen at second-hand,—and the thing was complete. The large and lofty apartments thus scantily and meanly garnished, were dismal enough, and were made more so by the desolate ideas of former grandeur which the gilded window-pannels, decorated ceilings, and marble mantelpieces brought to mind. In many places the walls had become damp, and the rich paper hung loosely here and there upon them. In others, large faded marks showed the site of rifled pictures, and again, wide blanks which were once covered by immense looking glasses, stared nakedly on the common observer and spoke broadly to the moralist.

This was a comfortless contrast to the warm and wealthy air that breathed in the mansion where Mr. Suberville had passed the best of his days, and Leonie all those of which she had any memory. Yet both one and the other, though so widely differing in character, were almost instantly reconciled to the change: he from his phlegmatic, and she from her romantic turn. He was somewhat of a fatalist—she a great

deal of an enthusiast. That it was fate was enough for him—its being *change* was to her every thing. But while they rather enjoyed, or at least did not suffer, from this alteration, they took especial care that she to whom it would have been dreadful, was kept comparatively ignorant of its extent as well as its cause. Poor Madame Suberville got a serious shock by the sight of the fire; and had she known all its mischief, that shock might have been fatal. But those about her were studious to let her know only a part of the loss; and when she was carefully removed from the house where she was first sheltered, to the new residence which I have just described, she perceived no alteration that could speak too plainly. She was carried up to the chamber chosen for her by her husband and Leonie, and there she found almost every one of the appearances to which she had been so long accustomed.

Thus the nervous invalid found herself, as it were, again at home; and in looking round her chamber and her cabinet, and observing Mr. Suberville's calm, and Leonie's contented face, she received an assurance of good luck more powerful towards her recovery than Glautte's prescription had been towards her illness. De Chouffleur recommenced his daily attendance on his pupil, in whose good graces, as well as her guardian's, he had gained a steady footing; and he regularly received, in spite of his remonstrances and protests, the same daily pay for his visits which he had from the first.

Things thus went quietly on, Mr. Suberville still strictly fulfilling the duties of mayor, having got an order from the minister, by return of the post which carried his offer of resignation, to continue in the office until proper measures could be taken to enable the government to act upon his communication. He made known this despatch to Glautte officially by letter, having, in his peculiar cool and determined way, resolved never to hold the least further communication with that bloated doctor and false friend, although he only knew of his abandonment, and not his treachery.

A good many of the neighbors continued to pay very kind attentions to the Subervilles; but among the few who ceased even their enquiries, after one first and last visit of condolence and curiosity, was the sister-in-law, the captain's widow, and mother of Alfred. She found, all of a sudden, insurmountable difficulties in the distance between Rouffon and the Vale—had everlasting headaches, toothaches, and nervous attacks, and what was worse, she was doing all she could to infect her son with some or all of those various maladies. But he was an honest-hearted fellow, and despised her shuffling. He had very nearly told her so, on assuring her of his resolution never to neglect his aunt and uncle, and never to cease loving his cousin Leonie. His mother, for the first time in her life, objected to his calling her *cousin*, but started back with horror at hearing *him* ask, for the first time in his life, "What would she think if he took a notion of calling her *wife*?" She knew he was a sturdy and self-willed fellow, and she being a wily woman, smiled, kissed him, and told him to follow his own fancy. He accordingly went oftener than ever to the Vale, and was received with as warm a welcome as before.

It was now a fortnight after the fire. Leonie was within two days

of the completion of her fifteenth year, and with it, as my readers will we doubt recollect, of the term of that vow which devoted her to the Virgin and a white coname. A month back, a release from these obligations had been to her a matter of considerable interest, and some anxiety. She looked forward to it as a new epoch in her life—as her entrance into the world, and her participation in all its joys. Balls, theatres, concerts, from all of which she had been hitherto proscribed were mingled before her fancy in bewildering confusion, and her head was filled with an imagined wardrobe of as many colors as the prism's, and a round of pleasures as bright as sun-beams, and as shifting as the winds. But the configuration that consumed all Mr. Suberville's wealth, seemed wholly to have changed the notion which Leonie had begun to conceive upon the subject. As the time came on she felt languid and listless, wept and sighed, she could not tell why, and wished the moment protracted, she knew not wherefore. Decided as she had hitherto been from the world, she trembled as she actually approached its wide arena; and she felt like the bird, which, born and nurtured in a cage, seems to throw a longing eye upon the open flights of liberty, yet flutters, as if in affection, on the threshold of his prison.

Madame Suberville, too, began to get very unquiet on this occasion. An excessive devotion had taken such hold of her mind, that she saw in every thing which passed around her some sort of connection with supernatural alliances and superstitious rites, and her veneration for the Virgin herself was almost inferior to that which she felt for her more peculiar patroness, Saint Ursula. She had therefore, without any hesitation, adopted the belief that the unfortunate fire was deeply connected with Leonie's approaching absolution from her infantile vow, not as a punishment for any fault of her's or her parents, but as an ominous warning against the evils which awaited her entrance into life. Impressed fully with this idea, and taking a less irrational view of the altered state of Leonie's immediate prospects (though ignorant of their extensive change,) she had formed the ardent wish that her husband and adopted daughter would consent to the latter's solemnly renewing her vow, for the period of five additional years; thereby securing to herself the certainty of Divine protection, and throwing an antagonist charm, if I may so express it, to counteract the dangers which those she already possessed were likely to attract towards her.

It is not necessary to dwell on the means which she took to impress all this upon her husband. It is enough to say that he coincided in all the rational part of her reasoning, and strengthened it by many powerful suggestions from his own clear understanding. Leonie received the proposition with delight; and the very morning that was to have witnessed her enfranchisement, saw her rivet her chains anew in the neighboring church.

She was attended by Mr. Suberville, and a female friend, who officiated as her mother during the short and simple ceremony; and when she returned to the house, light in spirits, and gay in heart, Madame Suberville wept over her as she gave her her blessing, and said she felt assured that good luck must be the consequence of this pious and virtuous deed.

That very morning the courier brought a letter to Mr. Suberville, while he was in his office at the Mairie, bearing the minister's seal; and on opening it, in expectation of receiving the confirmation of his removal from his situation, he read an order to continue in the office of mayor, with a testimonial of the emperor's satisfaction, in his nomination to the Legion of Honor, and the announcement of a pension of three thousand francs a year,—and a copy of Dr. Glautte's petition was enclosed.

Mr. Suberville read the letter twice over. He was decidedly gratified by its contents; for he was sensible of the value of emolument and distinction at the present moment. He handed the despatch to Faussecopie, with orders to insert it in the registers of the office; and while the astonished, but self-commanding clerk perused and wondered at what was before his eyes, Mr. Suberville coolly opened the packet containing the insignia of honor, which had been transmitted by the prefect of the department, accompanied by a most flattering congratulatory letter. He then calmly tied the ribbon to his button-hole, not from vanity, but from respect to the authority that invested him with the distinction; and while he sat with his usual quiet countenance at his desk in the inner Bureau, Glautte (having heard at the post office that despatches had arrived for the mayor and himself, and that a packet had also been forwarded from the prefect bearing the seals of the Bureau of the Legion of Honor) came bustling into the outer room, breathless from speed and anxiety, and a pale hue of agitation blending with the purple suffusion of his cheeks. "Make way there, make way!" cried he, shoving to the right and left some petitioners for justice, or wonton litigants, as the case might be, plenty of whom are always to be seen in the Bureau of a magistrate in Normandy. Having arrived at Faussecopie's desk, he was rather surprised at the cold air with which this confidential friend looked up at him for an instant, and then down again on the paper he seemed copying. "Why, Mr. Faussecopie," exclaimed he, in an authoritative tone, "you appear to have forgotten who I am." "No, no, my dear Doctor," answered Francois; "you are, I believe, nothing more nor less than what you were yesterday."

"We shall see that," cried Glautte, seizing the letter which bore his address.

"To Monsieur,

"The Doctor Glautte,

"At the Mairie of the Three Villages."

Glautte thought this a rather informal way of addressing a newly appointed mayor, and probably a chevalier of the Legion of Honor, for he was filled with the certainty of the first dignity, and the likelihood of the latter; and his mind being so made up, that was its sticking-place. He opened the despatch, and read as follows, from the same minister that wrote to Mr. Suberville:—

"Sir,

"Your petition has reached me, and I have to inform you in reply,

that from this date his majesty, the Emperor, dispenses with your services as adjoint of the mayor Suberville.

"I am,
&c. &c. &c."

Need I describe the doctor, as he sank into a chair, his eyes riveted on the fatal paper? or the malicious grin on the devilish countenance of Faussecopie, while he read it over Glautte's shoulder? or the stare of amusement from the surrounding peasants, who thought the doctor had got a stroke of apoplexy? or the chill glance of contempt which Mr. Suberville threw upon him, as he passed at the moment from his office? or Glautte's reviving start of horror, when he saw the volume-speaking decoration dangling from the button-hole of the mayor?

I feel almost inclined, however, to dwell in this place, on the policy as well as the justice (which are perhaps synonymous terms) of this conduct on the part of Napoleon, and the proof which it affords that, though ruling France with an iron hand, he knew so well how to cover it with a glove of velvet. It was just at this period that his designs against the commercial interests of England were assuming something of feasibility; that every thing which could encourage or do honor to the manufactures of France was a matter of utmost moment; and it was then also, that in his projects of gigantic aggression he sought a resting-place for the lever with which he hoped to move the moral, as Archimedes believed himself able to raise the physical world. That resting-place Napoleon thought he possessed in the enthusiastic attachment of his people; but while laboring to lay the firm foundation, he found that it was crushed even by the weight of the glory he meant it to support. In furtherance of his system, he had made minute inquiries into Mr. Suberville's situation and character; and in rewarding his services as they deserved, he secured a steady and faithful adherent to his cause.

Passing, however, from such contemplations as these, I must turn to the minor effects produced on Monsieur, the Doctor Glautte. He, it must be understood, had been always a violent admirer of Napoleon, and a determined hater of the ruined dynasty. In the early spring of the republic, he had been a perfect Roman of the better days of Rome. When General Bonaparte became an emperor, citizen Glautte became an Aristocrat; and as the one grew from greatness into despotism, the other followed the parallel course from independence into slavery. But matters were now utterly changed. This one act, coming home to himself, turned him at once into an inveterate enemy of the mighty master he had before idolized; and the imperial tree which thus shook a harmless insect from one of its branches, had reason soon afterwards to feel, during the storm gusts that bent it to the earth, that the reptile had fastened on it again, and was eating into its very heart.

When Glautte recovered from his downfall, which was magnified by the imagined height of his pinnacle, he looked for commiseration, at least, from his accomplice Faussecopie. The latter gave him only scorn instead of pity; and paid to Mr. Suberville an increasing por-

tion of respect and assiduity, that would have been perfect homage, had its object been likely to take pride in its degrading expressions. Faussecopie's dearest and nearest wish was, to obtain for himself promotion into the place from which his ingenuity had ousted Glautte; but his hope was quickly destroyed, by Mr. Suberville's announcement to the minister, that, being now freed from the laborious occupation of his former life, he would devote his whole time to the duties of the office, thereby rendering the assistance of an adjoint totally unnecessary. This arrangement met with full approbation at head-quarters, and Mr. Suberville thus gained a trifling addition to his former emoluments, and secured the best performance to all the business of his situation. Faussecopie, although he relaxed a little in his devoted attentions, still did the duties of his station so as to leave no room for complaint; and lay by, as it were, for that time in his affairs, which he saw had not yet reached high-water mark. Glautte, though he lost his place, and with it a great deal of his professional practice, was still able, from his long savings, and penurious habits, to live too well for such a man. He brooded over his resentments and disgrace; and muttered threats and hints, too low for any echo, and too vague for any object. With his neighbours he sank into utter neglect and scorn.

When Madame Suberville heard of her husband's confirmation in his office of mayor, his increased salary, and new honors, she dropped down on her knees, and thanked Saint Ursula; and she protested that every thing was owing to Leonie's having renewed, or rather remodelled, her vow. Leonie, without actually believing this, could not divest herself of the notion that Heaven was not displeased at the act; and she was thus made still happier in the step she had taken. Madame Suberville, junior, was delighted at it, as well as at the renewed brightness of the prospects of her brother the chevalier (as she now always called him), knowing that the vow secured Leonie's celibacy for five years to come, and thereby prevented her son Alfred from doing a foolish thing; while the Emperor's evident favour lead to the Chevalier's further promotion, and make an eventual marriage with Leonie the very wisest thing that Alfred could effect. One would have thought that the roads had been all suddenly re-made, or her constitution wholly changed; for obstacles vanished before her visits now, in proportion to their former accumulation. This made no alteration in the inhabitants of the Vale; and Alfred went on his old course, steadily, attached to his *relatives*, old and young, but not one atom more in love with Leonie from any of the recent changes she had experienced.

Not so Monsieur Hippolite. Every event either of good or evil, every wind, fair or foul, seemed to fix the sentiment and blow the flame that was at once devouring and burning his unhappy heart. Leonie had now become accustomed to his extravagance, and without knowing rightly what it meant, she was greatly entertained with its display. De Chouffeur never offered an avowal of his actual passion; Alfred kept up the joke without suffering it to go too far; Mr. Suberville found Hippolite a lively substitute for Glautte his former hanger-on; he was a relief altogether to the monotony of the scene;

and he became almost a part of the family ; not injuring, if he failed to improve, the amazing strides made by his pupil in her favorite study.

In four or five months, as soon in fact as it could arrive, Mr. Suberville had a letter from Philadelphia, which, though written in English, he supposed to be an answer from Mr. Mowbray to the letter which he wrote to him relative to the fire. He produced this to Leonie for translation, and she very readily put into French the following epistle.

Philadelphia, May 28th, 1811.

MR. JULES SUBERVILLE.

SIR,

I am desired by Mr. Mowbray, my employer, who is prevented by business from writing himself, to say that yours of March 16th came duly to hand. He is sorry for your misfortune, and will not forward the 550 bales of Cotton as per order. He guesses your health must be disordered at the same time, for which he is equally sorry.

And am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

for JOSEPH MOWBRAY and SON,
EENEZER WOODROOFE.

Mr. Suberville smiled at this laconic communication, translated pretty literally and in a faltering voice by Leonie. She examined every fold, inside and out, for the postscript, but found none, nor any imitation whatever of Edward's existence but the word "Son," which showed clearly that he was now included as a partner in his father's house. She wondered at first at this altered tone of correspondence ; she soon accounted for it by a thousand causes connected with Edward's entrance into business, and others as likely. Mr. Suberville saw at once that it was a connection the less—and he thought no more of it.

The sufficiency of his income, his frugal habits, and well formed plans on either a large or small scale, ensured a great degree of rational comfort to Mr. Suberville, in those circumstances which he had now no hope of bettering and little fear of seeing further reduced. For himself he was quite content, and for his wife as well. The great object of his cares was Leonie, and she had every thing necessary for her own moderate station in life. The wild aspect of the house began to be modified, as additional articles of furniture came in, or the eye from being accustomed to the scene became gradually suited to its dimensions. The garden, which was lately the deserted emblem of aristocratic ruin, was put into order ; its long alleys re-trimmed, its terrace newly decorated with shrubs and flowers, its fish-pond cleaned out and stocked again, its *jet d'eau* restored, its walks regravelled—and altogether the whole place was acquiring a modernized and cheerful air. Three years thus passed on, in a monotony of movement, but not unpleasingly. The calm was unbroken in upon by any event worth recording ; until the whole world was

shaken by the fall of the most colossal of its masters,—when the Vals of the Three Villages vibrated to the shock.

CHAPTER VIII.

The great political events of the year 1814, need not be recalled to mind. They must be quite fresh in the memory of most men, and particularly those who have been in any way connected with the nation where they principally took place. While those astounding transactions were only known in their breadth and magnitude to the other countries of Europe, France was naturally doomed to feel in her remotest corners the desolating details which followed in their course. Having, however, on a former occasion alluded generally to their effects, I have now only to revert to them as they made themselves evident in the narrow circle of our acquaintance in the Three Villages.

Just previously to the actual dethronement of Napoleon, all the efforts of zeal and artificers of intrigue were secretly put forward to make converts to the almost forgotten cause of Bourbonism in France. It was not till the country was forced to acknowledge the ruin of all hope as connected with the imperial sway, that its eyes seemed to open all at once to the necessity of removing the man who from being its glory had become its scourge; and of replacing him by the remote and little thought of race, whose fitness to such a distinction was not so much founded on claims of right as on the certainty that if a change was to be, they were the persons most likely to ensure its quiet establishment. On this principle the great majority of the rational part of France were promptly united in the support of Louis XVIII. But before it was completely developed to the country, many worthless instruments were set at work, and many amusing facts took place.

In the whole range of the little district immediately under our present observations, the only boldly avowed Royalist was Monsieur Hippolite Emmanuel Narcisse de Chouffleur. He had been, through thick and thin, in conquest and defeat, greatness and littleness, an open-mouthed reviler of Bonaparte, and upholder of the Bourbons. Every thing in which the name of Napoleon mixed appeared discolored in the eyes of de Chouffleur; but this prejudiced insanity found very few parallels in France, and made its possessor only an object of general ridicule. A man so devoted to his own cause and so despised by his opponents, was a very good instrument, notwithstanding, when the cause began to flourish. Any secret entrusted to such a depositary was not likely to be sought for, and if voluntarily revealed would create but little attention. Such was the reason—

ing of the Bourbon emissaries, and right glad were they to find so faithful and ready-make a partizan in a place where they have so little hopes of gaining a proselyte.

I am not prepared to state the actual contract entered into with de Chouffeur, or the minute instructions given to him on this occasion; but it is certain that he soon began to beat up for recruits, and that the first promising youth he fixed on for an ally was no other than the growling and grumbling Doctor Glautte.

Glautte was soon gained over to the good cause, for he met the tempter more than half-way. What might have been the inducements held forth will probably remain a secret for ever. They were certainly sufficient to make the Doctor a zealous advocate of legitimacy; and he, in conjunction with de Chouffeur, about the period of the invasion of the country by the allied powers, in the spring of the memorable year to which my attention is now fixed, began a course of desultory lectures on the merits of the Bourbons, wherever an audience was to be found, at the public houses, the barbers' shops, the bleach greens, or the little circulating library. These sapient coadjutors were thus the source whence the muddy stream of Royalism began to run, but, which flowed filtering along through the good sense and rational discussion of the people, until it became at length a current of clear and pure propriety.

A sudden burst of Bourbonism in the South of France decided the question. This feeling rushed like flame across the whole face of the country; and was irresistible, when backed by five hundred thousand bayonets, and indignant strength of long-outraged Europe to urge them on. The mighty trampler of those freeborn rights by which he had been raised, fell from the throne he knew not how to dignify, and saw crumble into dust that power, it required no common ingenuity of analytical misrule to decompose. The little triumph of Hippolite and Glautte was complete; but to give utterance to it, a more skilful penman than either of them was required. As they propounded to each other the momentous question of "Who must word our proclamation, and our address to the King?" they reciprocally answered "Who but Faussecopie!" It was true that he had been united with Mr. Suberville his superior, for some time past employed in the most strenuous efforts to keep up the failing loyalty of the Commune to the sinking house of Bonaparte. Eloquence, and reasoning, and promises, and threats had flowed from the ready pen of Faussecopie in most copious discharges; but luckily for him, the very day previous to the final decision, and to Louis being proclaimed King, the associate actors in the village revolution addressed him on the subject of their embarrassment, and put things to him in so strong and striking a point of view, that he (happening to know from official communications that the game was all up) came over to their demands, and drew up the required papers, in a strain of most fulsome Bourbonism and flattery, receiving the positive promise from the joint agents, that he was to participate in whatever honors or rewards might come to their share.

Preparations being thus made, the white flag was hoisted in the village, under the auspices of the triumvirate, and in defiance of Mr.

Suberville's efforts, his life being loudly threatened by the consistent populace. Announcements of the restoration were dispersed, the Mayor and other recusant functionaries were suspended; and that important office in the affairs of our villages was conferred, *pro tempore*, on Monsieur the Doctor Glautte, who instantly appointed for his adjoint his worthy and loyal friend, Faussecopie. As for Hippolite, his honors were only in the bud, but he got immediate assurances of ample reward, and thus ended the revolution of the Three Villages.

Here then was another serious alteration in the affairs of Mr. Suberville. He was now positively reduced to his one hundred pounds a year, for all the emoluments arising from his office, with the pension attached to it, were irrevocably gone. He had still, however, his presence of mind, and the decoration of honor; capability to meet the change, and a proud consciousness of having merited better fortune in his old age. To work he however went with the necessary retrenchments; and a system of the most rigid domestic economy was arranged with Leonie, who was now in her eighteenth year, and quite fit to bear a part in all such councils as Mr. Suberville had formerly been in the habit of holding with his wife. She, poor woman, was getting quite superannuated, notwithstanding the vivifying effects on her health, which had been consequent on the non-attendance of Glautte. She still bustled about a little—aired the linen, fed the poultry, et cetera; but for the serious management of the house, every thing devolved on Leonie.

Mr. Suberville had many overtures made to him from the new-formed friends of the restored dynasty, with strong assurance, that if he joined with the dominant party, and gave his influence in the neighborhood to promote the security of the Bourbons, he might count on almost any recompence which liberality and gratitude could bestow. But he invariably declined all interference in public concerns. He had felt it to be his duty to adhere inflexibly to the cause of his benefactor the Emperor, while that cause had a shadow of hope; for he knew how often political success depended on the turn of a hair. He saw and lamented the aberrations of the magnificent spirit which possessed all the grandeur fitting a conqueror of the world, but not the goodness worthy of the ruler of mankind. When Napoleon fell, Mr. Suberville was as well convinced as any one that Louis was the person by whom he ought to be succeeded; and he fervently hoped that this monarch had learned in adversity deep lessons of wisdom. As to dynasties, he held none in any particular reverence. He calculated that they all, like private families, offered the same certainty of fools and knaves, and the same chance of honest and wise men. A Bourbon or a Bonaparte was, therefore, all the same to him, provided they governed equally well for the happiness of the country. But personal feelings of gratitude attached him to Napoleon, and while wishing a peaceful reign to his successor, he was resolved never to take an active part in any of the political events that followed the Emperor's fall. He, therefore, and from his reduced income, lived more secluded than ever, enjoying only his favorite sport of shooting, accompanied by his steady old pointer,

Flore, who was, beside Leonie, almost his only companion. He had not quite discarded De Chouffleur but had been rather gratified than the contrary, by the spirit of fidelity which he had displayed. He was made a little sore one morning, no doubt, at Hippolite's being announced by the servant-maid, "*Le Chevalier de Chouffleur*;" and he felt a momentary sentiment like indignation, at seeing a very counterpart of his own ribbon attached to Hippolite's buttonhole. But this sensation subsided in a moment. Mr. Suberville felt it was just that government should reward their friends; and he turned his attention, and with great pleasure, from the ribbon to the coat, which, with the whole accompaniments of his dress, told a plain tale of prosperity and comparative wealth on the part of its wearer. The fact was, that independently of the honor conferred on De Chouffleur, he had got a handsome gratuity in ready money, and a place connected with the customs, which gave him a revenue of two thousand francs a year, with a house and garden rent free, situated towards the sea-coast, a few miles from Le Vallon; and besides some extra perquisites arising from this place, it was offered to him as only a stepping-stone from his former lowly circumstances, to a situation of much higher value. Who then so gay as Hippolite? Where was to be seen such a handsome assortment of new nankin breeches, silk stockings, and coats of the brightest color? Who shouted *Vive le Roi!* and *Vivent les Bourbons!* so loudly as the Chevalier de Chouffleur? Who showed such a muscular calf, or sprang so high, or cut so many capers at the Restoration balls?

It would be a less difficult task to reply to the interrogatories which I might put, as to the cause of a total change in De Chouffleur's bearing towards Leonie. He no longer approached her cringingly, on tiptoe, and with fear, nor breathed a half-muttered compliment by stealth. On the contrary, he now stepped boldly into her presence, putting forward his foot and his shoulder in reciprocal advance, and uttered broad and manifest eulogiums on her good looks and the beauty of her person. This was an alteration easily accounted for; it was the natural effect of prosperity on weakness, forcing the feelings beyond their just proportions, as a hot-bed urges a mushroom above its common growth.

Hippolite had never, during his three years' acquaintance with our heroine, conceived the most distant notion of marrying her. She seemed to him altogether in her grace, and youth, and innocence, a being of almost another sphere, and his adoration for her was like that which some Indians pay to a shadow, unconnected with any notion of the body from which it proceeds. Corporeal associations never joined themselves to his thoughts of her; and she appeared to him a pure emanation of all that was exquisite in mortality. He felt in her presence as a worm illuminated by a moon-beam, or a mote enlightened by the sun; and this extravagance of self-humiliation continued increasing, rather than unimpaired, even till the time of Mr. Suberville's disgrace, and his own good fortune. But from the very first days of the Restoration, he began to perceive a new light break in, little by little, upon his former conceptions—and the moment that he saw the order of the Legion of Honor dangling at his breast,

seemed to have produced in him a total regeneration. His confidence was unbounded. He strutted off to Le Vallon, shook Mr. Suberville by the hand with an air of unprecedented freedom; threw a familiar nod at Madame; gave a patronizing smile to the maid; and addressed Leonie with an air of impassioned absurdity, which surpassed all the growing familiarities of his recent manner.

Leonie was not so insensible as not to see the drift of all this. She did perceive it, and was more than ever amused. Mr. Suberville was not astonished, for he knew mankind; nor displeased, for he pitied its weakness. De Chouffeur, therefore, met no discouragement, and in his growing boldness, was satisfied that his main object was not only seen, but approved of. "How indeed could it be otherwise?" said Hippolite to himself one day, standing upon a chair as usual, to view himself and his last new suit in the glass. "How could she withstand my three long years of delicate attention—my smooth and soft-stealing entwinements round her heart—my ardent sighs—my burning glances—the ruddy complexion of these cheeks—the vigorous *tournaure* of that leg?"

He reflected on the best method to be pursued for securing the consent of Mr. Suberville to his marriage with Leonie, she being for her part, he was convinced, only anxiously waiting the proposition to jump into his arms. He accordingly resolved on consulting Faussecopie. The latter knew well that Hippolite was most egregiously deceiving himself; but he saw what a hold such a confidential intercourse as this would be upon him; and he was determined to encourage him to the utmost. He had been some time longing for an opportunity of proposing to him an extensive scale of illicit proceedings for which his place afforded great facilities; but he was rather at a loss how to open his proposition, when Hippolite's disclosure of his designs, gave him a new chance of forming a reciprocal confidence. He smothered for awhile his own intentions; and, entering with apparent warmth into the Chevalier's designs, he pointed out the great necessity of a cautious demeanor, and not too precipitate proposal.

As for Alfred, whom we have for some time lost sight of, he did not stand, as Faussecopie supposed, in Hippolite's way as a rival; but sooner than suffer him to marry Leonie, he would have shot him through the head. He heartily despised him as a man, and hated him as a politician; for Alfred, like the greater part of the youthful population of France, was an enthusiastic Bonapartist, and, like many others, was rankling under all the uncomfortable feelings attendant on half pay. Soon after his uncle's establishment at Le Vallon, he had been appointed a sub-officer on board a man-of-war. He had made a voyage to India, where he remained some time stationed, and had just returned to France in time to be discharged with other anti-royalists; and was now giving vent to the stock of heat laid in under the tropics, in affection to his friends, and hatred to their enemies. Among the latter he of course reckoned the recreants Glautte and Faussecopie; and he only kept on decent terms with De Chouffeur out of regard to his uncle's and Leonie's wishes, and for the excellent fun of quizzing him on all occasions.

Affairs thus went quietly on during the remainder of the year, and the only remarkable events in that which followed, were, the return of Bonaparte from Elba, and the worshipful mayor, Glautte, having received a paralytic stroke. The aforesaid paralytic stroke, was one of the luckiest things in the world for its temporary victim; for Glautte had, the very day previous to the attack, sketched the heads of a letter for his adjoint to fill up and forward, offering an abandonment of the Bourbon cause, a return to his old imperial principles, and a "desperate fidelity" for the future, provided he was confirmed in his place of Mayor. Faussecopie, always on his guard, determined to wait the results of the first battle or two before he forwarded the "adhesion," and the opportune illness of the mayor gave him a good excuse for letting it lie over. He therefore kept it very snugly, and the emperor's final ruin justified his foresight. During the hundred days, the most flattering importunities were addressed to Mr. Suberville to step into his old place; but he, seeing the very hazardous state of affairs, prudently resisted them all; and it was only owing to the hope of his accepting the office that it was suffered to remain in the possession of Glautte. There, however, Glautte remained, and at the second return of Louis there he was confirmed, acting nominally as a magistrate, and, for form's sake, wheeled daily in his chair into the office, to doze away still more soundly than ever, during the causes which Faussecopie decided according to his own fancies, and in the name of his superior. This arch rogue was now running a full career of petty tyranny and extortion. With the bloated body of Glautte, and all its corporal responsibility between him and detection, there was no ill-doing at which he stopped short; and the system of absurd severity entered into all over the kingdom, after the issue of Napoleon's splendid but futile attempt, left considerable power in the hands of every minor tyrant. Faussecopie, among other misdeeds, had fairly drawn De Chouffeur into his darling plans of cheating the revenue, and they were both deeply implicated in such malpractices, as left them quite in each other's power.

During all these proceedings, public and private, Leonie, apart from them all, had arrived at full maturity of mind and person. There never was a more analogous or more beautiful progress made by the body and the intellect. They had both gradually reached a height, a fulness, a bloom, a delicacy—all in just proportions, and rarely seen so exquisitely combined. During the three years which had elapsed since she first saw De Chouffeur, she had advanced in growth until she arrived at two inches above his height, and her beaming blue eyes shot a radiance down upon him that was enough to set a-blazing much less combustible materials than he was made of. Innocence seemed to repose on her broad fair forehead, but still to leave room for the expression of deep thought, which tempered the enthusiastic expression of her half-opened lips and their bewitching smiles. Then there were her teeth, and her nose, her eyelashes, her golden hair, and Heaven knows how many other *et ceteras*; these I must every one leave to the imagination of my readers, gentle and simple, for this is just such a theme as I must be cautious not to get too deep in.

Her romantic flights at fifteen had become very much restrained by the sense good which

"Grew with her growth, and strengthened with her strength."

If she ever now thought of the Mowbrays, it was with a smile of mixed amusement at her own childish folly, in the first instance, and of contempt for their full grown worldliness in the next. Mr. Suberville never heard of or from Philadelphia after the consolatory letter of Mr. Ebenezer Woodroffe, and he neither thought of nor cared further about the matter. But Leonie congratulated herself on one good which arose from her fancy of fifteen, namely,—that it had been the impulse to make her commence the study of English, in which language she was now a great proficient, indeed almost perfect, with the exception of the pronunciation, which she had, like her master, as badly as possible. The acquirement of this language, which had originated in a girlish fancy, and had been hitherto viewed by her in the light of a mere accomplishment, she was now fully determined to turn to a better account. She saw with pain that the utmost efforts of economy were not sufficient to allow the indulgence of those long enjoyed comforts which had become an absolute want to Madame Suberville, who blended with her ever growing piety a considerable liking for many of the good things of life. But Mr. Suberville and Leonie's pleasure at witnessing the spiritual enjoyments of the excellent woman, was considerably damped by the conviction that her worldly indulgences must be retrenched, unless some plan could be devised for adding to their scanty income. With this view Leonie conceived the plan, and proposed to Mr. Suberville, that the moment her vow expired she would become a teacher of English to such of the females of Rouen and its vicinity as might be inclined to take lessons in that now wide-spreading language. Mr. Suberville had nothing to oppose to a plan that tallied so perfectly with his notion of right; but Leonie felt that to fit herself for the undertaking, it was absolutely necessary to improve her wretched pronunciation. For this purpose she suggested to Mr. Suberville the idea (which he immediately put into execution, notwithstanding a strong national antipathy) of offering, through the Paris papers, board and lodging to some native of England desirous of improvement in French, in a family where the English language was well understood, though imperfectly spoken. Madame Suberville, De Chouffeur, and Alfred, were all informed of, if not actually consulted on, the subject. The first of these was a quiescent approver of all her husband's and Leonie's measures. The two latter were enraged beyond description, and strongly opposed the plan; the one from indignation at the slight cast upon himself and his knowledge of the English language, the other from hatred of every individual of the nation which effected the downfall of his idol emperor. Mr. Suberville and Leonie persisted in their intention notwithstanding; and Alfred contented himself with swearing he would insult the Englishman if any arrived at Le Vallon; while De Chouffeur began a series of abuse upon the country that had formerly given him shelter, as if to prepare himself for aiding in

Alfred's projected attacks. To combine their measures effectually, he taught some scraps of miserable slang reproaches to his fiery associate, such as "Milord Rosbif," "Sir Plumpudding," "Monsieur Bisteck," &c.; and besides these, a song, with which they agreed to serenade the expected interloper, the chorus of which (being the only part afterwards communicated to me) was,

De Englishman be von ver bad man,
He drinka de beer, and he breaka de cann,
He kissa de wife, and he tomp de man,
And de Englishman be von ver God dam.

This was all got by heart by the delighted Alfred, and he spent hours in rehearsing it with Hippolite.

CHAPTER IX.

The advertisement was duly forwarded to Paris for insertion; and to allow fair scope for previous enquiry as to the family, on the part of the public, it was mentioned clearly that the accommodations offered were in the house of the Ex-Marie Suberville. A week had not elapsed when a letter, signed George Wilson, arrived, stating that the writer, an English gentleman, desirous of such a situation for a few months, and being then an invalid, would present himself the following day at Mr. Suberville's; and not speaking a word of French, he requested that some one of the family, who understood English, might be at home to receive him. The letter contained references to a banker of the first respectability, and stated that terms were not at all an object with the writer.

The prompt success of their plans was extremely gratifying, both to Mr. Suberville and Leonie; but if any thing checked her pleasure, it was the contemplation of the cramped, crabbed, and old-fashioned hand writing of the letter. Though wonderfully cured of her early romantic turn, she had still enough of it left to have made her form some pleasant speculations on the kind of inmate they were about to have, and she half hoped for some young, handsome, and agreeable person, qualities which she settled at once to be quite incompatible with the production of such a scrawl.

The next morning convinced her that she was not wrong, and completed her dissatisfaction. While she and Mr. and Madame Suberville were sitting at their rather homely breakfast, a post-chaise drove up to the house, and as soon as the postilion had dismounted, and the servant maid, Lisette, approached the door, the person within prepared to get out. Leonie had had no inducement, from the style of the hand-writing, to pay any particular attention to her dress in

honor of the new comer, and she appeared at the window in her neat but common morning deshabille—a white calico jacket, and a petticoat of dimity, with white cloth slippers, and a cap of unembellished muslin, under which her beautiful ringlets were all carefully tucked up. The first things she distinguished, as she looked towards the chaise, were a pair of green spectacles raised on the forehead of a man, and a pair of dark eyes glancing toward the house, from under their bushy eyebrows out of a sallow countenance, which was surrounded by a profusion of clotted tangly black hair, and large whiskers, and his head covered with an ill-fashioned slouched hat. The next thing which struck her, was a pair of long legs, muffled up above the knees in flannel, and she plainly discovered that the gentleman was a gouty sufferer, of (as well as she could judge from his gait, face, and coat-muffled figure) about forty years of age. Seeing how much he wanted assistance, she quite forgot all notions of the disappointment which his appearance confirmed, and proposed to Mr. Suberville that they should both go out and help him into the house. They went out accordingly, and walked down the steps, offering their assistance to Lisette and the postilion, who were helping the stranger. When he saw the reinforcement approach, he seemed to scowl at them under his spectacles, which had resumed their proper place, and throwing a still more sickly tinge on his cheeks. He then gave a jerk to the arms that held him up, and stopped short, crying out "Who speaks English?"

"It is I, Saar," answered Leonie.

"Will you give me your arm, then? for this damned fellow tottering about in his big jack boots will throw both me and himself down," added he, shaking off the postilion, and taking hold of Leonie's arm.

"Wit mosh pleasure," replied she, in her naturally gracious tone.

He seemed pleased with the sound of her dulcet voice, and looked for a moment in her face. She answered the stare by a deep blush, when he turned away his eyes, and they proceeded up the steps.

"Is that your father?" asked the stranger, pointing to Mr. Suberville.

"Dat is papa, Saar," said Leonie.

"How d'ye do, Sir? very glad to see you," said the stranger.

"Papa does not speak Eenglish, Saar," said she smiling.

"What nobody but you, eh?"

"No, Saar."

"So much the better;" and with this gruff reply he reached the parlor, where Madame Suberville had remained. He acknowledged the civil bows and short speeches of her and her husband with a nod, and, turning to Leonie, said, "What's the use of their talking to me? Didn't I say, in my letter, that I know nothing of their lingo? Tell them to let me alone, will you. What's your name, my dear?"

"Leonie, Saar."

"Humph!—What's the English for that?"

"De Eenglish, Saar? It is a proper name, 'tis de same in all languages."

"Ha! very well then, Lionie."

"Leonie is my name," interrupted she, smilingly.

"Well then, Leoneine, let me be shown to my chamber, will you."

In obedience to this wish Leonie was stepping across the room to call Lisette; when she struck against the stranger's dressing case, which had been placed on the table unperceived by her. It fell on the floor close to Leonie without touching her, however: but the stranger, who saw it fall, and appeared to think he might catch it up ere it would hurt her, sprang from his chair quite actively towards the place. Mr. Suberville, as well as she, surprised and pleased at this proof of politeness so unsuited to his gouty appearance and gruff manners, looked at him in astonishment, but were sorry to perceive him stoop down as if he had strained his leg in the exertion, while the pain it caused seemed to have driven every drop of his blood into his sallow face. He appeared anxious to avoid the observation, as if annoyed at the exposure of his infirmity, and merely replying to Leonie's expressions of fear of his having hurt himself, by short answers of "It is nothing at all, nothing at all, now don't make a fuss,"—he hobbled up stairs accompanied by all the family. Great pains had been taken to make his apartment comfortable, and he expressed himself quite satisfied with it, and the party retired from his room, all convinced that he was an eccentric specimen of John Bullism, but on the whole pleased with him, rather than the contrary.

Leonie felt that she had already made an immense progress in English pronunciation. She immediately perceived there was something markedly different in the sound of many of the stranger's words, from the very same when coming from the mouth of Hippolyte. "Nothing," for instance, was so unlike "Noting;" "Sir," so different from "Saar;" "English" from "Eenglish," and so forth, that her ear seemed to have been new tuned. The first thing her curiosity prompted her to, was an examination of the stranger's passport, which Mr. Suberville had caused her to demand in order to scrutinize it, and send it to the Marie within the twenty four hours prescribed by the law. She there saw not only his name, "George Wilson," and his height, "five feet ten inches and a half," and the colour of his complexion, but also his age, "forty-four years." This last item surprised her, for she thought he did not appear quite that, to the imperfect glances she caught of his muffled up face; but she was delighted to find him designated "Native of London," having fallen into the notion, common with the French, that London is, like Paris, the most perfect school of pronunciation; and little thinking that a thorough-bred cockney asking "What's the *noos*?" or talking of his "*blou* coat," (to say nothing of the horrors committed by the agency of his w'h h's and r's) is as wide of the meridian of good pronunciation, as the Ayrshire peasant or the Tipperary turf-cutter.

While Mr. Suberville perused the recommendatory letters from the banker and a commercial house, whose signatures were quite familiar to him, Leonie busied herself about making preparations for dinner, the stranger or, (as I must now call him,) Mr. Wilson having expressed a wish to dine in his own room, and repose himself after the fatigues of his journey. The day passed over very quietly,

except on the part of the new inmate, who kept walking up and down his room till almost evening, was seen frequently at his windows, looking out with a spyglass upon the landscape; all which convinced Leonie that he possessed an intelligent and inquisitive mind, in unison with his piercing black eyes. She was in fact determined to like him, in spite of her first prejudice, for she hoped to reap great benefit from a constant intercourse with him.

A little before dusk, Hippolite and Alfred, true to their intention, came to Le Vallon, and having ascertained that the lodger had arrived, they planted themselves under his window, aware of the room he was to occupy, and began to sing together their song,

"De Englishman be von ver bad man," &c.

They had scarcely finished the first verse when the new comer advanced to the window, which was open, and listening for awhile, and then looking sternly on the intruders, he closed the casement and walked away. So did both Alfred and De Chouffeur; they came into the house, and declared to Leonie that there was something so commanding in the stranger's look, that they were utterly unable to stand his gaze or proceed in their song. They took an early leave, and Leonie went to bed, thinking much of the odd-looking and stern-glancing new comer.

In the morning Lisette brought her a neat billet from Mr Wilson, written in the same crabbed hand with the letter, requesting that she would favor him with her company for a few turns in the garden after breakfast, which he begged to have in his own room. She gave a ready assent, and about twelve o'clock she heard him come hobbling down stairs with Lisette, wrapped up just as he was the day before, although the sun shone in all its brilliancy. Leonie had paid a much greater attention to her toilette on this occasion than on the previous day; and when she came out of the parlor to meet her hobbling acquaintance, she looked so much more beautiful than before, in her neat cambric muslin gown, with a slight gauze *fichu* loosely tied round her neck, and her profusion of golden hair shining in the sunbeam which shot across the hall, that Mr. Wilson started back as her figure caught his eye, and he fixed such a look upon her as he had done the day before, when the sweet tone of her voice seemed to penetrate to his heart. Leonie blushed now as she had done before, but she did her best to shake off her embarrassment; and offered her arm to the invalid. He took it, and leaned on it a while, but as they walked in the garden he involuntarily, as it seemed, changed its position, drawing it gently under his, and supporting his feeble movements entirely on his stick. In this way they continued to walk up and down the long alleys, on the terrace, and occasionally reposing on the benches, until, to the utter surprise of Leonie, Lisette came to announce that it was within an hour of dinner time. They had been full three hours at their promenade! Leonie did not know which to be most surprised at, the rapid march of time, or the active movements of her companion, whose vivacity seemed to bear him up against all the effects of infirmity and fatigue. He had talk-

ed and listened to her, (it seemed to her at least,) with equal pleasure, and she certainly had never talked and listened to any one with half so much enjoyment. She was so delighted to hear English spoken to her as he spoke it, with such a distinct enunciation, so marked and determined a tone, and, wonder of wonders! with such gentleness—for he did not seem the same person that he had been the day before. Then there was such good sense in all he said, and his eyes had acquired such softness! It was altogether, thought our heroine, very extraordinary indeed.

Mr. Wilson retired to his chamber to prepare for dinner, and when he appeared at the table he was as stiff and abrupt as ever. "The gout (thought Leonie) has seized on his temper as well as his ankles, and he is angry with me for having made him walk too much." But the next morning the same thing occurred. They walked again, and still closer to the dinner hour, for Lisette was obliged to summon them twice before they re-entered the house.] The third day the soup was actually on the table when they came in; and so matters went on for a fortnight.

The favorable change produced in Mr. Wilson in this short period was very evident. Leonie appeared to have effected wonders greater than the *eau medicinale*; and her patient (for so he was) declared that he was a new man. He began to throw off, by degrees some of his wrappings and muffings, and his figure seemed gradually to grow more upright and firm, and his face to improve so much upon acquaintance, that had it not been for his horribly sallow color, his savage looking hair and bushy eye-brow, she would have begun to think him a handsome personable man. Mr. Suberville and his wife were both much gratified to find Leonie so well pleased with their guest, and congratulated themselves that he was a middle aged and gouty invalid, as they felt no danger in trusting her to be so constantly with him, and Mr. Suberville freely followed the sports of the field, while Madame had ample time to attend to her devotions, instead of watching her daughter, as would have been the case, had she been in the hands of a man who might endanger her heart, and with it her happiness.

But this suspicious sort of reasoning did not hold good with Hippolite. He viewed things in a very different light indeed. From the very first day that he dined in Mr. Wilson's company, he was not more awed by his haughty and terrifying manner, than conscious that he was already deeply smitten with Leonie. Love is a most tormenting opener of the eyes. There are few secrets connected with its object that it does not make evident to its victims. It pushes aside their lashes, and rises their lids, and sharpens their visions in spite of them; and it was certainly now performing these operations on De Chouffleur with a vengeance. He looked on this weather-beaten and grim-visaged stranger with a fluttering horror and hatred; and "George Wilson, native of London," with his sombre cheeks and verdant spectacles, appeared to the unhappy Chavalier a mingled personification of that "green-eyed monster," that was eating into his own heart, and the green and yellow melancholy that made him pine in thought. He saw the progress of affairs with a

keen observation ; and as he, day after day, marked the growing intimacy between Leonie and the rival he had wilfully conjured up for himself, his whole inward man seemed to fail. He never could utter a syllable in the presence of this formidable personage, when he dropped in of an evening, or came by invitation to dinner. Wilson showed a marked dislike to him, and almost withered him by his looks. If he came over in a morning, he was sure to peep through the garden hedge, and as sure to see Leonie and her new old friend walking arm in arm together ; and many a time poor Hippolite was pushed on by his curiosity to creep slyly into some of the arbors, and listen to the conversation, till fear seemed to twitch him back by the skirts of his coat. As to the mere matter of rivalry with this obnoxious interloper, Hippolite did not fear it a moment, if he could but have fair play. But it was evident that Leonie allowed liberties to the other, which he never in his boldest moods, presumed to expect. She hung on the Englishman's arm, and let him take her hand in his ; and unless he, Hippolite, had happened to be at the other side of her, ogling and sighing, and squeezing in his turn, he saw that there was nothing like equality of chances.

He was quite wasted all of a sudden ; his spirits seemed dead and buried ; he was crestfallen, heartless, and it would almost seem hopeless ; but he was not quite so in reality. He tremblingly reckoned (in the moments when his expiring courage flickered in the socket) on the deep impression he must have made on Leonie ; he trusted much to Madame's good offices, to his personal advantages over Wilson, to his title of Chevalier, and to the ribbon at his button-hole. He saw things go on week after week, with a sort of desperate patience ; and he had been only deterred from acknowledging his jealousy, and at once putting matters to a test, and proposing plumply for Leonie, by the nervous presentiment he had of having his fears confirmed, and his offers refused : and then imagination always conjured up the horse-laugh of Alfred, the diabolical grin of Fausse-copie, and his own sneaking-appearance, in case he should be forbidden the house. He, therefore, shrank from the point that would have put his present state of comparative prosperity in jeopardy.

But there was a minor misery attending on all this. Alfred, the former friend of Hippolite, at least as Hippolite thought, the promised persecutor of the Englishman, the pupil in both slang and song of the downcast Chevalier, the inveterate hater of John Bull, had evidently gone over to the enemy ! From almost the first day of Wilson's arrival, Alfred had abandoned all his projected plans of hostility, and a strong mutual liking seemed to have taken place between these apparently dissimilar beings. Wilson expressing a warm desire to make himself acquainted with a smattering of French, had applied to Alfred to be his instructor. This request was made through the medium of Leonie, to whom he declared he would not expose himself, by his bungling attempts at a new language. Alfred readily consented, and Wilson was eager in his application, so that, to Hippolite's wonderment and great displeasure, they were constant companions, whenever Wilson was not engaged with Leonie : a horrible annoyance, Hippolite thought, to the fiery-minded Alfred, who

did not speak a sentence of English, and was the worst adapted person in the world to teach his own language to a foreigner.

Week after week passed over, De Chouffeur writhing under the chain of suspense, which necessity seemed to have rivetted round him; Leonie speaking English almost like an Englishwoman; and Wilson having, by the dint of apparent resolution, advanced rapidly in French, in which he was now able to make himself understood by Mr. and Madame Suberville, though committing frightful trespasses on the domains of grammar, mixing genders together in promiscuous confusion, paying no respect to persons, and jumbling the tenses indiscriminately, according to whatever mood he might himself happen to be in. Alfred used to burst into fits of the most violent laughter on these occasions; Mr. Suberville used to look as grave as he could; Leonie could scarcely keep her countenance, though evidently mortified at the ridicule cast upon her new friend; who took every thing in good part, and used even sometimes to mingle in the laugh raised at his own expense, with an almost boyish enjoyment.

This state of things had gone on full four months, when, it being then the summer season of 1816, and Leonie only wanting a few weeks to complete her twentieth year, and to be freed from her vow, Hippolite saw that matters must come at last to the long deferred and much dreaded crisis. In true accordance with the cunning, as well as the sharp-sightedness, given him by his passion, he had been for some time laying a train, which should gain him the support of Madame Suberville in his forthcoming declaration of love, and the momentous demand which was to follow it. For this purpose he had been cautiously undermining the pleasant footing which Wilson appeared to have gained in Madame's opinion. It is not necessary to enter into the details of Monsieur Hippolite's insinuations for this purpose; the dark hints he threw out of the stranger's intentions; the fillips he gave to his listener's prejudices against the English; and, above all, the stress which he laid on Wilson's being a heretic; then, by artfully coupling the mention of his great intimacy with Leonie, raising a host of horrors in poor Madame Suberville's mind; and softening down all again, by devoutly expressed wishes that Leonie might get a husband sensible of her merits, and one whose rank and prospects in her own country might ensure her a happy establishment.

All was prepared. He passed whole mornings in working up Madame's feelings to a proper pitch to receive and favor his proposition—and he made it at last in his very best manner. No sooner had he explained himself, than the old woman flung herself upon his neck, melting with joy. "Oh! oh! it is what I always wished—this is my happiest day—oh! Saint Ursula be praised!—Oh, my son, my son!" exclaimed she. "Oh, my dear Madame," cried Hippolite, (enfolding her fat person as far as his arms could go round it.) Ah, if I durst hope to say, my dear *mamma*!"

"Say it! say it!" exclaimed she, weeping, "and make my old age happy!"

"Oh then, dear good mamma, give me, give us your blessing!" uttered Hippolite, dropping down on his knees.

"God and Saint Ursula bless you both, my children!" stammered out the doting old lady, as if Leonie had been beside him; and they both embraced, and muttered and blubbered together, until Mr. Suberville came in from the adjoining room, attracted by what he thought the sounds of lamentation.

"For heaven's sake what's the matter, my dear?" asked he, entering his wife's chamber. "Monsieur de Chouffleur! in God's name what are you about?"

"Oh, nothing wrong, nothing criminal, my dear sir," replied Hippolite, in agitation. "Let no suspicion enter your heart against this faithful wife, and inestimable woman."

"Suspicion against my old wife, you blockhead! What the devil do you mean?—answer me immediately."

This command Hippolite was totally unable to obey. He was too much terrified at the first desperate plunge made in this affair, and he could only remain pale and trembling, and half choking on his knees, thumping his breast, and crying out, "'tis here! 'tis here! 'tis here!"

The task of explanation fell upon Madame, and she executed it in a very cool and collected manner. The first burst of pious enthusiasm being over, she was able to relate, not only Hippolite's proposal, but to mention in a very luminous manner, her own views of its importance, and the reasons which weighed with her for giving it support. Mr. Suberville listened attentively and calmly, and was only interrupted in his thoughtfulness, by Hippolite taking advantage in a break in Madame's oration, to entreat him plaintively not to forbid him the house, for his hopes had sunk already below zero, and he gave up all for lost. "Forbid you the house," cried Mr. Suberville, stretching out his hand: "on the contrary, you may stay and dine if you like it."

"Oh, generous man!" exclaimed Hippolite, kissing his hand in revived ecstasy; and then, springing across the floor, he seized his hat, rushed to the door, turned round for a moment, put himself in the third position, clapped his hand to his breast, made his best bow, and flung himself out of the room.

When he was gone, Mr. Suberville pondered long and seriously upon what was said to him by his wife. He was at first struck with a very disagreeable sensation at the bare mention of *De Chouffleur* becoming the husband of Leonie. He had long observed his foolish and absurd attachment; but the idea of his marrying her never glanced across his mind; but he had been just beginning to calculate the *pros* and *cons*, when Hippolite made that plaintive appeal which was answered by the invitation to dinner. The cogitation ended in his resolving to leave all to Leonie's decision, a plan which did not at all suit his wife's notions of matrimonial arrangements.

At dinner Hippolite behaved much in the manner of Jack Pudding at a puppet show, or a bottle of Norman cider after the cork flies out. He bounced and grinned, and overflowed, and was made up of gesticulations, grimace, and froth. Wilson and Leonie, with Alfred, who was present, thought he was crazy; and Leonie was quite confirmed in this opinion, when, upon her quitting the room to

get some sweatmeats for the desert, he bounced out after her, and seizing her by both hands, in the hall, he flung himself down on one knee (without thinking of the nankin that covered it), and with rapid and insane utterance, asked her half-a-dozen times over, "Will you be my wife, lovely Leonie? lovely Leonie, will you be mine?"

His wild and infuriated air terrified poor Leonie, while the grasp he held of her arms hurt her violently, and deprived her of all power and she felt herself quite faint, and sinking upon the floor. Hippolite, attributed this to the overpowering emotions excited by his ardor, thought he had nothing to do but catch her in his arms, and almost smother her with kisses. He did seize her, and was just preparing to perform the rest of this ceremony, when Leonie, perceiving his intention, screamed aloud, and struggled to get from him. At the sound of her scream, Mr. Suberville, Alfred and Wilson rushed out of the dining room, only just in an inverse order to that in which I have written their names. Wilson sprang into the hall, with the activity of an enraged tiger, and seeing the state in which matters stood, he clasped Leonie in his left arm, and with the whole force of the other, seized the astonished Chevalier by the collar, and swung him across the hall. Hippolite tottered along, with his arms extended like a ship in full sail, till his open hand and forehead came together in contact with the opposite wall, from which he rebounded several paces, and then fell flat on his back. He jumped up quicker than he had fallen down, and clapping his hands on his forehead, (where a large bump had instantaneously sprouted out, huge enough to have puzzled the whole school of phrenologists), he ran out of the house into the back ground, and towards the garden, screaming "Help! murder! thieves! thieves! murder! help!" Alfred pursued him to quiet his alarm, but he, quite certain that he was followed by the ferocious Wilson, redoubled his speed, roaring lustily and making sundry efforts to spring over or burst through the high thick hedge which surrounded the pleasure garden. He was quite deaf to the mixture of hallooing and laughing by which Alfred was nearly suffocated; and at last he made one terrific plunge into a hollybush, where his kind pursuer caught him. While Alfred pulled at his kicking legs, Hippolite plunged further into the hedge, so that it was with great difficulty Alfred, faint from laughing, could succeed to extricate him. Out he got him at last, still struggling and praying for mercy; and, with his clothes and face torn by the prickly holly, he presented a most doleful spectacle. Alfred, after many efforts was at last enabled to convince him of his safety, and he led him panting and trembling towards the house, which he insisted on entering by the private narrow staircase leading up to Madame Suberville's apartment.

A scene of dreadful confusion had taken place. Madame Suberville hearing what was passing, had bustled out of the dining-room in mixed anxiety for Leonie and Hippolite. The latter had made his escape when she reached the scene of action, but she heard his screams, and saw her daughter folded to the bosom of the vile heretic. This was a spectacle too overpowering for Madame, who flung herself into a chair in strong symptoms of hysterics, calling aloud on

Lisette, her husband, and Saint Ursula. The two former flew to her assistance immediately, and employed themselves in carrying her up stairs. Leonie recovering from her fright, accompanied them leaning on Wilson's arm, and having ascertained that Madame Suberville had shaken off her first alarm (which was followed by loud expressions of execration against Wilson) a feeling of confused sensations quite indefinable to Leonie herself, induced her to yield to the movement by which he gently led her from the room, by the private stairs towards the garden. As they descended, he reassured her bewildered spirits in his most soothing tone, and was growing at every step downwards more warm and tender, when just as they reached the bottom, they saw Alfred enter the little door, bearing up the lacerated, bumped, and ghastly head of Hippolite, with one hand under his chin, while the other supported his body. At sight of Wilson, De Chouffleur uttered an exclamation of horror, flung himself with a convulsive twist from Alfred, and attempted to escape. Alfred held him fast by the sky-blue kerseymere coat; but the first pull tore it from stem to stern, leaving a large portion in Alfred's hands, while Hippolite having thus slipped his cable, was pitched forwards by the concussion, and fell bodily into a large cider vat that stood in the yard half filled with water.

As he scrambled out, dripping, and crying like a child at his miserable appearance, and while Alfred stood almost convulsed with his favorite occupation—laughter, Wilson and Leonie, both whose feelings had reached a height of excitement quite abstracted from the enjoyment of the farce, hurried on towards the garden. I must pass over the scene which was displayed in Madame Suberville's room above, when Hippolite presented himself before her, and when, being a little revived by the encouragement and commiseration she gave him, he avowed his resolution to steal after Leonie and her heretic companion, watch their movements, and listen to their secret conversation. All this he did, while Mr. Suberville remained consoling his afflicted helpmate, and Alfred scampered off no one knew where. The result of De Chouffleur's enterprise will be recounted in another chapter.

CHAPTER X.

If I contemplated paying a bad compliment to the sagacity of my readers, I might perhaps devote a page or two to a short retrospect of the intimacy which had been for four months forming between our heroine and Wilson. But can even one paragraph be necessary to explain its consequences to the quicksighted, or would a volume be sufficient to develop them to the dull? Few I believe need be told that Wilson and Leonie were lovers. The susceptible (and, after all,

the happy) beings who have been similarly situated, may well imagine what strides love makes in the heart of a man who has for four months, or even four weeks, been wholly devoted to an intercourse with a beautiful and amiable girl; and who can judge of the difficulty with which a sensitive mind can resist the continual attacks of an ardent and passionate suitor, not actually hideous, or only moderately advanced in years. It is in vain that some speculative theorists may talk of gradual advances and a progressive passion; the initiated know well that the heart is always taken by surprise. It was so on the present occasion at all events; and when Leonie began seriously to enquire into the state of hers, the nature of the attack, and its means of defence, she found that it had been long in absolute possession of the assailant. She submitted to the loss with the listlessness of youth, and hugged her chains with the fervor of an enthusiast—for enthusiasts are always the readiest slaves. She raised her conqueror into an idol, and absolutely adored him in spite of his yellow skin, his tangled locks, overhanging brows, gouty legs and green spectacles. We need not dwell on his feelings. He loved! that is enough for those who know the meaning of the word, and it is for them I write. He had not yet, however, actually said "I love you," for he knew (as well as my readers) the luxury of lingering long before the direct avowal bursts forth—the rich enjoyment of making the secret felt before it is divulged—the voluptuous indulgence of letting the eyes speak while the tongue is hushed. He knew all this, and much more, of those feelings that prompt the lover to stand, as it were, in the centre of a charmed circle, which he hesitates to break through, from mingled awe and adoration of the spirit he is about to conjure up. But Wilson had other reasons for his silence.

The moment had at length arrived. The hurrying feelings called into action by this bustling day, brought on the crisis, as it ought to come about, in all the feelings of unpremeditated emotion. As he paced the garden, with Leonie, agitated and listening, at his side, one arm round her waist which his fingers barely touched—but seemed afraid to press, and one hand clasping her's with a nervous yet gentle motion, he poured out in the rapid phrase of passion, the whole avowal of his. She heard him, blushing, timidly, tremblingly, silently, while her head seemed to swim, and she trod with a step so light that she thought she moved less on earth than air. An actual confession of love, which has been long evident before it is avowed, may be supposed to be an affair of very few words, and these very short and matter-of fact. But I, and my readers, and Wilson, could every one of us undecieve (if we thought it worth while) the uninformed in such concerns. We might dwell long and dilate largely on the tautologies and pauses, the parentheses and variations, the looks, the sighs, and the hesitations which accompany the direct confession. All this, however, I leave to the imagination of those who have not experienced the like, and to the memory of those who have; and I shall simply beg to call the attention of both one and the other to the figure of Monsieur le Chevalier de Chouffeur, creeping on his hands and knees close behind the trim-cut box hedge that divided the walk occupied by Wilson and Leonie from the *potager*, or kitchen garden.

When De Chouffleur arrived by a winding passage at the spot, and took his station in the cabbage-bed, Wilson had got very far into the subject matter of his declaration ; and, as he grew more warm and animated, Hippolite caught occasional glimpses of his face, which seemed to glow with a coloring that tinged his yellow cheek, like the rays of the setting sun on the fading foliage of a beech grove. Leonie was flushed at one moment, and pale the next. Her eyes beamed bright, yet were occasionally filled with tears. Her lips were parted, as if the sighs which burst in short and quick succession could not give them time to close. De Chouffleur heard and saw enough ; and to accomplish his misery, he caught distinctly the following words, and saw clearly the actions which accompanied them. "Then you have heard, have felt my words—You understand my feelings—You permit me to love you. Say so, my Leonie."

"I have said it."

"And you can love me in return?—you reply nothing!"

"Need I speak?"

Here Wilson's lips pressed themselves to Leonie's hand, and nothing reached Hippolite's ear for a few minutes but a confused murmuring, mixed with deep-drawn sighs.

They made another turn, and again approached the Chevalier, who had advanced his head still further into the hedge, and widening the aperture he was peeping through. As they came on he heard Wilson once more.

"You can love me! What *me*—Leonie! look at me again, old, infirm, weather-beaten as I am! *Can* you?"

"You never appeared old to me—I don't know how it is, but you always seem only half your age."

"What, with these muffled up and gouty legs?"

"But you step so firmly, and are on some occasions so active." (De Chouffleur shrank back.)

"But these spectacles?"

"Why, your looks seem to dart through them; under them, and over them all at once." (Hippolite doubled himself up.)

"And this deep and sallow skin, Leonie?"

"Oh! if you could see the bright glow that burst through it now!"

"Then in spite of all, you can love me! Oh say so, Leonie, tell me the only thing that is wanting to complete my happiness; confirm my hopes, and let me prove that you have not thrown your heart away on old age, ill health, and ugliness."

Here they stopped, and Hippolite with breathless wonderment, stretched out his head again. Leonie looked with a mixture of delight and fear on Wilson, and murmured softly "I *do* love you, be you who or what you may!"

"My triumph, my happiness is then complete!" cried Wilson in ecstasy—and quitting for a moment his hold of Leonie, who stood without speech or motion, he tore from his legs the unwieldy garters that had so long concealed their fine proportions. Hippolite glanced his eye for a moment back at his own calves—but turned almost despairingly towards Wilson's again. "Away then with this disguise!" cried Wil-

men, (flinging aside the gaiters) "and these poor counterfeits," (dashing the spectacles against the ground) "and these—and these—and this"—accompanying each exclamation by corresponding pluckings at his whiskers, his eye-brows, and his wig. "Oh that I could now wash out the atrocious stains which have so long disfigured the real color of this face, and concealed the deep workings of a heart that is wholly yours! Dearest, Leonie, do not be alarmed—if you could love me before, believing me to be what I seemed to be, surely I cannot be less pleasing to you now, being what I am! If forty was bearable, is not three-and-twenty to be tolerated? Why don't you speak to me—Why do you gaze so fixedly? are you afraid of me?"

The last tone touched the chord, she burst into a flood of joyous tears, looked for a moment or two more (as if to remove her doubts) at his brilliant eyes, his arched brows, his short curly brown hair, his smooth cheeks, and even, I believe, gave an involuntary half-quarter glance at his handsome legs, and then, as if quite sure of her man, she flung herself into his hospitable arms, and cried as if her heart was dissolved by sorrow, instead of being filled with delight.

After some short time spent in this way, during which De Choufleur found himself beginning to get horribly cramped and uncomfortable, in body as well as mind, Wilson gradually loosened his grasp of Leonie and set her at unasked-for liberty. "Now, my sweet Leonie," said he, "we must part for a moment: go now into the house, go into the presence of the excellent old couple within, and tell them what has passed: I will be immediately with you."

"Good God! I dare not venture."

"Oh, you must, you must—it must be told, and will come best from you."

"But what, what could I say?"

"Say nothing. Show yourself to them with that blushing face, those streaming eyes, and smiling lips. If their minds are not chilled, and their memories lost; if they ever knew what it is to love, to tell it, and to be told it for the first time—they will understand and pardon you. Go, dearest life—I will join you quickly."

Leonie instinctively following the wise laws of nature—obeyed. As she walked slowly towards the house, Wilson hastily gathered up his discarded disguises, and while he was tying them up in his pocket handkerchief, De Choufleur, feeling himself abandoned as it were to his fate by the retreat of Leonie, was resolved to get out of the neighborhood of his formidable rival. He therefore crept quickly along, committing various depredations on cabbage, turnip, and parsnip beds, and when he at last got out of this vegetable territory, with his nankin breeches, and buff waistcoat, and the remains of his coat, besmeared with all shades of colors, he looked not quite unlike an *omelette aux fines herbes*. His first feeling, after the flurry of wretchedness had subsided into something approaching to a fixed purpose, was to fly and recount to Alfred all that he had seen and heard, not doubting but that his exposure of the treachery and baseness of Wilson would rouse his indignation to the utmost, and induce him to join in measures for his total discomfiture. Full of these hopes, he was making his way towards a little

shrubbery which would lead him round again to the offices, and so into the house, when he perceived Alfred, who seemed to have been lying in wait like himself, go quickly towards the walk where Wilson was still employed. Hippolite was afraid to call out, lest the bloody-minded Englishman might pounce upon him and tear him to atoms; and while he was picking up an apple, wherewith to give a gentle hint to Alfred to turn round, he was beyond all former surprises, surprised, at seeing him and Wilson meet together and most cordially embrace. The new appearance of the latter seemed nothing new to Alfred any more than the purpose on which he had been employed; and could Hippolite have doubted for a moment the fact of Alfred having been all along in his secret, and that he was an arch imposter, it became now too true, as Wilson told him aloud, with unbounded delight, and in excellent French, that the avowal was made, the disguise abandoned, and he the happiest of men. Alfred received this with strong symptoms of sympathy and warmth of friendship; while Hippolite, half frantic at the combination of his miseries, had no resource left him but to run off as fast as he could to Faussecopie, and unboresan himself completely to that ready repository for every secret which could in any way be turned to his own advantage.

Hippolite had scarcely left the garden, when Mr. Suberville accompanied by Leonie, for whom he had come out to search, approached the place where she told him in broken accents, she had left Wilson. She had not had time to explain, even if she could have summoned courage, the metamorphosis in the man whom it was quite unnecessary for her to designate as her lover. Mr. Suberville therefore took off his hat and made a low bow, qualified by an astonished stare, when he saw Alfred come forward, accompanied by a young man, a stranger as he thought. Wilson soon, however, undeceived him, and offered to remove all doubts as to his identity, by untying his pocket handkerchief and pulling out his masquerade dress again. Mr. Suberville, who gradually recognized his guest, in spite of the fluency with which he spoke French, and the youthful eloquence of his style and manner, waived this evidence of his imposture: and in terms of decisive authority demanded an ample explanation of his motives, his objects, and his situation. To this the other replied with great humility, acknowledging that circumstances had forced him to a stratagem which he had felt absolutely necessary to enable him fully to know the object of all his present affections. He declared himself to have heard of the beauty and the virtues of Leonie, and that determined to see and judge for himself, he had availed himself of the fair occasion offered by Mr. Suberville's advertisement. He now proclaimed himself her devoted lover, and, in a voice half vehement and half decided, swore that no obstacle should keep her from him. Pressed by Mr. Suberville to announce his family, his connections, and fortune, he declined; saying that imperative circumstances opposed themselves for the present to a more unconditional statement. That those impediments had alone prevented his sooner avowing his sentiments—for he knew that on their becoming evident, he could not with propriety continue under the roof with her whom he dared not at once make his wife. Here poor Leonie

began to turn pale ; and the keen eye of Wilson seeing her emotion, he quickly re-assured her by most solemn pledges offered to Mr. Suberville of his honor, his frankness, and his faith. He appealed for a confirmation of all to Alfred, whom he said possessed his entire confidence under a vow of temporary secrecy. Alfred declared that he was every thing that was upright, and honorable, and brave; and Leonie recovered her reliance, and even went through with a good grace, the ceremony of a farewell, which seemed to herself almost to rend her heart. But she felt so bewildered, that it was not till an hour afterwards when Wilson was fairly gone in company with Alfred, that she had time for the admission of those afflictive fears and doubts, which, happily, find relief in tears. There was, however, an air of confidence and affection in Wilson's manner that quite consoled her, and she would have staked her life on Alfred's faith. She therefore saw them drive away in a hired gig, with tolerable composure; and Mr. Suberville communicated to his wife in his own quiet manner, the whole circumstances, in which his mind was not yet made up. Madame Suberville declared her conviction that Wilson was an adventuring villain, whose purpose had been to ruin Leonie and rob the house; and gave particular directions to Lisette to count the forks and spoons, and carefully barricade all the windows, and look under the beds, before she went to her own.

Francois Faussecopie was not by nature a laughers. He sneered, and leered, and smiled sometimes; but, as far as I could authentically ascertain, he was known to laugh outright but once—and that was when he perceived the figure of De Chouffeur enter his lodgings, after having effected his escape from Mr. Suberville's garden, as before related. Faussecopie certainly laughed heartily, and was probably very much astonished at finding himself gifted with this new faculty. Hippolite, on the contrary, was in the melting mood that evening. His exertion and agitation caused the perspiration to flow profusely from every pore, and he moreover wept bitterly. He related with as little circumlocution and as much precision as he could, the rapid march of circumstances from his forenoon's explanation with Madame Suberville, down to the period actually occupied in the narration. He demanded from Faussecopie in the first place vengeance, in the next advice. Faussecopie promised to give him both one and the other when he had duly inquired into the case thus stated. Hippolite voted against any delay, and called for summary justice,—and he pointed to his bumps and scratches as living witnesses of his wrongs, and invoked the slumbering vigor of the adjoint in justice to the names of his sacrificed coat, waistcoat and breeches, whose unhappy end had been the consequence of the ruthless attack made upon him.

Faussecopie remarked that it was a strange circumstance that Alfred had, about an hour before, paid him a visit and got Wilson's passport countersigned for Paris; and at this unlooked for news De Chouffeur instantly felt that the hope of revenge was snatched from him, as he doubted not the villain had fled. This was very soon confirmed by a return to Le Vallon, where he ascertained the fact; and whatever might have been his disappointment on the score of

his baffled hopes of vengeance, he was amply repaid in the security from danger, and in the open field which was now left him for bullying of the most extravagant kind. He immediately trumpeted forth all through the villages the announcement of his rencontre with the runaway Englishman, who, according to his version of the story, had, after a cowardly assault, fled from his threatened vengeance, and left the prize of their contest, Leonie, to be the reward of his gallantry and affection. Having thus paved the way for the affair becoming public, he next prepared a statement of the transaction to be published in some of the Journals of Paris, in which "George Wilson, native of London," was denounced as an impostor, assassin, coward, and various other epithets, in accordance with the strictest delicacy of the French language, and the Chevalier's character. This distorted and abusive statement appeared in due time—and was in due time duly answered, as will be seen in the sequel.

While De Chouffleur was occupied in his fulminating fabrications, Faussecopie was employed in taking more material steps. He had all along had a serious grudge against Mr. Suberville, who had continued to treat him with haughty contempt, notwithstanding his ill-earned elevation. Glautte, too, had never ceased to feel that deep hatred which roots itself so firmly in the breast of those who have returned friendship by treachery, and given back injuries for benefits. They had both often darkly talked over the means of injuring the object of their spite; but they feared him so much, and knew so well his high standing with men of all parties and opinion, that hitherto they had not ventured to throw out an aspersion or aim a shaft against his reputation or his peace. Now, however, a fair prospect seemed to open before Faussecopie to effect him serious injury and embarrassment and when he pointed out to Glautte the villainy through which he saw it, the Doctor rolled his eyes and licked his lips, as if somewhat of the gusto of a favorite dish had waisted its savory perfume to his senses.

Faussecopie immediately set about preparing of charges against Mr. Suberville, founded on the fact of his having harbored a stranger in his house, who after months of secrecy, had been discovered to be a disguised impostor, who had terminated his concealment by a fierce and treacherous attack on the person of an eminent royalist, Le Chevalier de Chouffleur, and had then fled accompanied by a notorious Bonapartist, one Alfred Suberville, a nephew of the accused; all of whom were no doubt secretly engaged in some treasonable plot. These were the heads of a denouncement drawn up with all the tortuous casuistry of which Faussecopie was perfect master; and it was forwarded to the higher authorities, with a demand that full powers should be invested in Glautte and his adjoint, to sift the business to the bottom; preparatory to which, it was demanded that Mr. Suberville should be put under *surveillance*; and it was added by way of postscript, that from the name of the impostor, little doubt could be entertained of his being a relative of the notorious "Sir Wilson," who, with his associates, "Sir Hutchinson," and "Sir Bruce," had acted so vile a part, (in the opinion of some wise well-wishers to the Bourbon Dynasty, its honor and glory,) but by affording

shelter to a fellow being, who had thrown himself on their generosity, instead of binding his hands and turning him over to the executioner.

To add weight to this formidable accusation, the signature of De Chouffleur was demanded by Faussecopie. Poor Hippolite turned pale and hesitated, for he knew its falsehood, and had a strong feeling of attachment and respect for Mr. Suberville; besides which he was afraid this step would ruin him in the opinion of Leonie. All these objections were, however, lulled to rest by the assurances of his oracle, Faussecopie, that so far from being a bar towards the accomplishment of his views, an embarrassment of this kind thrown before Mr. Suberville would greatly facilitate them; for in case of Leonie being unfavorable to his pretensions, a salutary threat of his power to ruin her papa, or a well-given hint of his ability to save him, would naturally work miracles with her in his favor. "Give me the pen!" cried Hippolite, convinced and enraptured, and he wrote at the foot of the paper "*Le Chevalier de Chouffleur*," with a flourish at the end of it that I could not attempt to imitate.

This affair once put in train, all Hippolite's attentions were now turned to re-establish himself in the favor of Leonie, and for this object he commenced an attempted renewal of his assiduities towards her. But he had become utterly odious to her; and when she thought of the pollution which her cheek had been on the point of suffering from his protuberant lips, she shuddered with unusual disgust. He next threw himself on the friendship of Madame Suberville, and received her promises of the most strenuous support, and every encouragement to persevere in his suit. He sounded Mr. Suberville's sentiments, and was told by him with coldness and composure, that he could not oppose the wishes of Leonie, that she was impenetrably resolute in her rejection of his love; and that he requested him in consequence to absent himself wholly from Le Vallon. This threw him into despair and rage, and he insisted upon hearing his fate from Leonie herself. Mr. Suberville had no objection, and he called on her to gratify De Chouffleur by sealing his sentence with her own voice. She came in consequence, and unmelted by his emotion, unchanged by his offers, and unruffled by his threats, she cut his pleadings short by a deep sounding command to quit her for ever, and then she retired from the room. Mr. Suberville accompanied her, and Hippolite walked out of the house, giving the door such a pull after him as almost tore it from its hinges, and had nearly shaken Madame Suberville out of the easy chair in which she was reposing above stairs.

The accusation against Mr. Suberville, and his assumed connection with the deeply dreaded "*Sir Wilson*" and his friends, caused serious consideration on the part of the government. Ample instructions were given to the Maire and his adjoint, to take such measures as their wisdom suggested to examine the affair; and strict commands were issued to the police to seek out the runaway impostor and his companion Alfred. Orders were immediately issued at the pressing instance of Faussecopie, for the arrest of Mr. Suberville, the examination of his pupers, and such further measures of rigor as might

seem requisite. He was accordingly arrested by his former clerk, accompanied by a party of the military police, which is at one and the same time the best security of the person, and the surest debaser of the mind of whatever people may be subject to its degrading protection. Mr. Suberville was carried to the prison of the capital town of the department, seals were put upon all his papers, and I leave to my readers to imagine the affliction of his wife and that of Leonie, who was obliged to remain with her as her only support and solace.

Mr. Suberville being placed in secret confinement, no direct intercourse was allowed him with his family, or the few friends who were disposed to compromise their own safety by an attempt to see him; and Leonie was left for more than a month in all the agitation of suspense as to his situation, and without receiving one word of intelligence from Wilson or Alfred. Her only comfort was the faithful Lisette, who kept up her spirits by a mixture of cheerfulness and good sense, and who never failed now, in good earnest, to barricade the doors and windows, and look nightly under the beds.

During this interval De Choufleur was not idle. He made a thousand efforts to see Leonie, but without effect. Lisette would never allow him to enter the house under any pretext, threatening him and his fine clothes whenever he appeared, with discharges of sundry liquid annoyances from one of the windows, at which she invariably stood prepared to make good her menaces if he failed to retreat. The better part of valor had its full sway on these occasions, and he was at last forced, as his only hope, to consent to a plan formed by Faussecopie for getting Leonie most positively into his power.

Whatever may be the relative merits of French and English jurisprudence, there is one provision on the side of English law, that may be either an advantage, or on the contrary, as people choose to consider it. I mean that which allows of suits for the recovery of damages in cases of broken promises of marriage. This possible salutary, but positively most indelicate, procedure has never yet been publicly introduced into France, and I believe it was reserved for the litigious province of Normandy, and its arch-litigant Faussecopie to attempt an importation of such a custom, even in the modified form of magisterial interference. On the occasion now in question, he positively counselled Hippolite to proceed (or at least to threaten proceedings) against Leonie for breach of promise of marriage!

There never was an idea more monstrous, or a thing less likely to succeed. In the first place, Leonie had never made such a promise: in the second, if even she had, she was not of an age sufficient to make such a promise legal: in the third, it was clear there was no evidence that she had done so; and after all this, there was, as I before said, no law in France to justify such a proceeding, except that which authorizes the bargain called *marche au dedit*, that is, a promise made, with a forfeit in case of its breach. These have been, I believe, sometimes applied to contracts of marriage, but there was no pretext of a forfeit in this case. But all these obstacles vanished before the law-loving spirit of Normandy, and the ingenious roguery, and insolent daring of Faussecopie; and Leonie was cited by De

Choufleur to appear before the worshipful mayor of the Three Villages, on the 20th day of October, 1816, to answer his complaint of her refusal to comply with his just expectations, fostered by herself, and her own implied promises to become his lawful wife.

A sudden blow was given to these proceedings by an unexpected order for the liberation of Mr. Suberville. But the proceedings were not quashed by it, for he had himself a strong spice of the Norman spirit in him, and he was not averse to let Leonie try the question, that would afford him a good opportunity to overwhelm her persecutors with disgrace. He, therefore, answered for her that she would obey the summons, and appear.

I pass over the particular account of Mr. Suberville's liberation (the steps that led to it being to be related hereafter), as well as a description of the great joy which it produced in the inhabitants of Le Vallon, the despair it struck to Hippolite's heart, and the brazen villainy which it strengthened in Faussecopie. It was, moreover, very nearly giving a second stroke of paralysis to Glautte. The freedom of Mr. Suberville was never contemplated by Faussecopie when he issued the summons for Leonie's appearance to answer De Choufleur's nonsensical charge. His calculation was, that fear of the consequences would have been sufficient inducement to her to come into the Chevalier's views, and it may be unnecessary to say, that he had his own interest in perspective. He saw that Glautte was going off fast, and he had already begun to make underhand representations to government, which might lead to his superseding him. Hippolite promised his influence (which was great with the royalist party) to accomplish this object as the price of success. Faussecopie thus stimulated, was resolved to persevere; and he thought that by new embarrassments being thrown in the way of Mr. Suberville, Leonie might, after all, be forced to consent to the supplications of Madame, and the suit of De Choufleur. The day fixed for the hearing before the mayor, was the one following Leonie's coming to the age of twenty years, when her vow being expired, she would appear, for the first time, out of the costume it imposed upon her, and be (or look at all events) licensed for secular enjoyments, and liable to secular pains.

Leonie was utterly shocked at the idea of appearing in the public office of the Mairie, confronted with De Choufleur on such a disgraceful charge; but she had a mind naturally strong, and still further invigorated now by her confidence that Wilson was watching for her safety, and would snatch her from this threatened degradation. Mr. Suberville longed for the day, for he was quite determined to meet this charge, and to hurl such exposure at Glautte and Faussecopie, as would inevitably force them to hide their heads for ever.

But I hope that by this time my readers have been asking themselves, "But where is the author—the walking-gentleman, who is thus recounting us this long story, without ever once introducing himself on the scene? We should like to know what has become of him, and how did he collect all these particulars?" I must therefore, state, that the very day of the trial of Hippolite *versus* Leonie, I came, by a curious, and, I cannot help thinking it, a lucky adventure

to be actually present, and in some sort a party concerned in the cause. The next chapter shall faithfully and shortly detail the circumstance.

CHAPTER XI.

On the evening preceding the memorable 20th of October, 1816, I had arrived, after a long day's march, on the summit of the hill which it may be recollected I made some mention in the opening of this story. To bring back the scene to my readers' minds, I must beg leave to refer them to the short description of it, which is to be found somewhere within the first dozen pages. Placing themselves there with me, they will be pleased to look down upon the varied and not uninteresting prospect, and have the goodness to lose themselves, as I did, for a little time, in a reverie, which began by those reflections on *manufacturing*, as opposed to *natural*, landscapes, the result of which was, in my opinion, highly in favor of the latter.

After I had gazed and thought enough on the prospect, and the associations arising from its view, I proceeded, with our old friend Ranger at my heels, to descend the little bridle-path that led down to the valley. It wound round the hill so as to lengthen the way considerably, but still render it so much the more easy for the peasants coming to market with their little horses or asses, laden with grain and garden stuff, or returning homeward with their purchases. I, as well as the before-mentioned animals, bore my burthen; for I had had good sport that day, and I carried, besides my knapsack and gun, a hare and several brace of birds in my game bag. The evening was warm too, for a heavily laden pedestrian at least, so that I went very leisurely down the hill. The view of the country was soon lost to me, and I had nothing around on which to moralize, if such had been my mood, but the trees in all their variety of autumnal hues and appearance. Some of them had already nearly lost their foliage, while others sturdily maintained their covering in spite of the season's change. All the broad leaved flaunting tribe, the sycamores, limes, and horse-chesnuds, which, had, during the summer, displayed such luxuriant profusion, were now nearly stripped of their fine garments, which lay withered, crisped, and crackling under my feet. The hardier sort, on the contrary, had scarcely lost their clothing; for the beech and elm, less showy than those when the whole wood was dressed in its holiday attire, had now a great advantage, and were still comfortably, though not gaudily clad. Their robes showed little change of tint, as if their rough materials were of a better dye, as well as of a coarser web. The poplars, so stiff and stately, that they looked like the dandies of the grove, were losing all chances of concealment, with the scanty remains of yellow dra-

pery, which dropped from their thin branches. An alder by the path-side was a perfect skeleton. Its twigs were trembling, though there was scarce one breeze abroad, and at the extremity of the topmost of these, a solitary leaf was fluttering, as if it longed and laboured to escape from the tree; and (could we but suppose the latter endowed with immortality as well as life) it might be thought the last spark of animation struggling to quit its frail and expiring tenement. While the reader searches for the moral of all this, he may suppose me to have got to the bottom of the hill, emerged from the wood, and entered on the level road, which followed the course of the rivulet directly towards the Villages.

As I lounged along, a rustling in the branches above, and the sound of horses' feet mingled with rough voices, caught my ear; and, looking upwards, I saw through the openings of the wood, a party of mounted gend'armes coming down by the very path I had just left behind me. The appearance of these military protectors of the peace harmonized well enough with the artificial air of a manufacturing landscape, and produced a sort of civilized picturesqueness; but the union had no pleasing effect upon me, and I heartily wished myself once more among the volcanic remains of Auvergne, or amidst the primeval wildness of the Pyrenees. In accordance with this feeling of dissatisfaction, I rather increased my pace, and, as if the quickened movement, added to my, perhaps, suspicious and poacher-like appearance, had excited the attention of the party, they immediately increased their speed, and when they reached the level road, they followed me at a round trot, and soon overtook me. When the leader, who was a sub-officer, came up with me, he pulled in his horse, and fell into a walk, and after eyeing me with the sharp glance peculiar to a thief-catcher, he accosted me, touching his three-cocked hat:—

"You are a sportsman, sir?"

"Yes sir."

"And so am I too. Sporting's a fine life, when a man can follow it honestly. You have had good luck, sir?" looking at my bag.

"Why yes, tolerable."

"May I ask where you have been shooting?"

"Wherever I could get leave, as I came along."

"Have you travelled far to-day, sir?"

"From Brionne;" a town about thirty-five miles off.

"Diable! and a-foot?"

"To be sure."

"Egad, that's too much of a good thing though. I myself go a shooting sometimes, but a round of a couple of leagues satisfies me. Is that an English gun?"

"Indeed it is."

"Will you let me look at it awhile?"

"Certainly." And suiting the action to the word, I handed him my Joe Manton. He examined it a moment in evident admiration, and then gave it to one of his four followers, saying, "Here, take charge of the gentleman's gun—he must be tired of carrying it after his long day's march."

The man took it, while I expressed myself obliged for the civility,

and readily acceded to the officer's proposition, that another of the party should carry my game-bag at his saddle-bow. Thus lightened, I stepped on briskly, and my vanity being a little excited by the officer's praises of my fast walking, and wonder at my apparent slight fatigue, I went forwards not a little pleased at finding my equestrian companions obliged to rise into a smart trot. As I outstripped the leader before he put his horse out of its walk, I observed, and thought it was more from familiarity than discipline, that two of the men came up to me, and kept one at each side of the road. The other two approached closer behind, and the lieutenant himself giving a *sacre* or two to his shambling-gaited steed, trotted up along-side of me, swearing that I was the best *marcheur* he had escorted for many a day. While we chatted together, and as his off-hand good-tempered manner rather lessened my general dislike against his species, we approached the first of the Three Villages; and it was arranged that I should go on to the second, and that we should sup together at the inn where he always took up his quarters, and which he assured me was the only decent one in the commune.

As we passed along in this order through the little street of the village, I observed many people come out of its populous dwellings, and stare upon us with various expressions of countenance, and when we finally reached the inn, which was distinguished by a dangling daub over the door purporting to be a green, red, and yellow cock in the act of crowing, with the words "*Le Reveil Matin*," encircling him a large crowd, for such a place, was assembled. I saw many of the gazers make enquiries from the gendarmes as they led their horses into the stable-yard, and many a stare fixed on the brigadier and myself as we entered the house. He led me to a little back parlor, looking out to a straggling sort of a garden where I saw from the window one of the men had already arrived, and was walking carelessly up and down, with his sword in its scabbard flung across his arm. I remarked to the officer my surprise that he had abandoned his horse so soon, but he replied with an air of indifference—"It is all in good time—he is fond of flowers and a great loungee."

"Loose discipline this!" thought I—but it was no such thing. When we were seated, my companion asked me to let him see my passport. He said that it was a mere matter of form, but that he had a devilish strict fellow to deal with in the adjoint of Mairie, and that just then there were some unpleasant feelings against the English afloat among the authorities of the commune. I gave him the passport immediately, and also, at his request, my license for carrying arms. He then begged me to remain quietly where I was, while he went to order supper, and stepped up to the Mairie to show my papers to the adjoint.

I accordingly, as he shut the door, set to work to pass the time in the way usual in such situations. I looked at all the coarse prints, until I was well acquainted with every feature of the various saints, marshals, princes and criminals, who certainly bore a most marvellous family likeness one to the other. I examined as keenly as any trained phrenologist the plaster bust of Louis XVIII., which stood upon the mantel-piece; and as I removed the wreath of artificial roses which

had withered over the brows, where some royalist finger and thumb had placed them, I wished that I knew enough of the science to find out the boss (if such exists) of wisdom in governing, that I might have reason to reckon on, what I hoped so fervently, his making the country free and happy. I do not know what Spurzheim might have found, or fancied he found, had the bust been under his hands instead of mine, but I know what boss I should *not* look for, were I so to occupy myself to-day.

A quarter of an hour's occupation of this kind, and the thoughts arising from it, made me find the room not large enough for me. I was tired of its narrow dimensions, and wanted air. I therefore opened the window, which was raised about six feet from the garden, and was just going to jump down, when the flower-loving lounging gen^darmes waved his hand as if forbidding the movement, and on my not understanding the hint, he advanced towards me, half drawing his sword from the scabbard, with a civil request that I would not come out under the penalty of its blade finding a sheath in my body. I drew back immediately, supposing that the man had been drinking, and on opening the door to make my exit in a more regular manner, I saw to my great astonishment a six feet, rawboned counterpart of my garden neighbor standing outside, sword in hand, and he gently putting his arm before me, requested that I would "do him the pleasure of giving myself the trouble to re-enter the room, as I was a prisoner."

I made some astonished exclamation—repeated his last word, I believe—but he was peremptory, and I stepped back, much to the satisfaction of Ranger, who seemed to think he had walked enough for that day. While I chewed the cud of this indignity, which it was rather difficult to swallow, the brigadier came back, and he anticipated the reproaches I was about to heap on him, by such hearty expressions of regret, and by such an overwhelming torrent of apologies (*crushing* my hands all the time between his) that I abandoned my right of being angry, and took a great liking to my companion, particularly as he loosed his hold, while we sat down to a supper of the best the house afforded.

The brigadier told me that the adjoint, Monsieur Faussecopie (the first mention I had heard of his name, however, old an acquaintance he may be of my readers) had found every thing right in my passport and my licence, and that I was quite at liberty to pursue the tenor of my way the next morning if I thought proper. This I assured him I certainly should do; and, our repast finished, we separated and retired, in great good humor with each other, to our respective bed-rooms.

When I got to bed, I was kept a considerable time awake by a party of noisy fellows, who were drinking cider and brandy in a room below, and singing and talking most boisterously in honor of their having gained a lawsuit that day at the assize court of Rouen. This is the greatest of all victories to a Norman; and I have very little doubt that William the First would have made light of his conquest of England in comparison with the glory of gaining a chancery suit, such at least as they exist in our days. That being the case, I

was little surprised at the enumeration of measures of cider and bottles of brandy which were poured out on the present occasion, as I was duly informed by the chubby, sabbotted, high capped damsel who led me to my chamber, and received the amount of my expenses overnight, it being my avowed purpose to start very early the next morning on my way to Dieppe, and some of the interesting places in its neighbourhood. As I turned round at last for about the twentieth time, in vain endeavours to give a deaf ear to the merriment below, I heard the door barred and bolted within, and as the ejected party straggled off, one fellow exclaimed in a voice that sounded gloriously thick and liqnory, "Go along then go along! for my part I'll sleep on the straw in the stable here, and dream of Lawyer Dupre's beautiful argument." The others laughed at this intimation, but the fellow persisted, and as their footsteps died away, I actually heard him rustling about in the straw as if he was making his bed. I then fell asleep, and was awoke by Ranger licking my hand about six o'clock in the morning.

As I looked out into the garden from my window, I saw the trees beautifully marked upon the sky behind them, every leaf and branch looking like filagree work, while a breeze was brushing over the grass, and carrying along with it the fragrance of the last flowers of the year. I saw that this was just the morning for Ranger and myself, and he seemed to snuff the gale as if it bore to his keen nose the scent of some feeding covey, or a lazy hare that had not yet quitted her warm seat to nibble her dew covered breakfast. All was therefore soon in marching order, and we descended the stairs very quietly, opened the street door, and walked out. There never was a more complete picture of repose. Not a soul seemed stirring in the little hamlet; not a wreath of smoke arose from any chimney; and the brick houses, marked with their transverse beams, and studded with many-paned lattices, appeared to have no life within them. The crowing cock over the door of "mine inn," seemed to open his beck in mockery of the real scene; and although I knew my right by previous contract, to leave the house to its fate, I was still a little anxious to give notice to some of the inhabitants that I was going. I therefore walked round to the yard. There, too, it seemed as if the genius of sleep had waved his noiseless pinions over the scene. The red-eyed dog lay dozing in his wooden house, the real cocks and hens were still on their roost, with their heads under their wings; and a group of geese was in the corner, some lying down, some standing on one foot, others on two, but all fast locked. If Young's lines speaks truly, not one of their lids had been ever "sullied with a tear."

Having done every thing that conscience dictated, I was trading away when just as I passed by the stable door, which stood ajar, I heard a sound quite in unison with this sleepy region, for it was a deep-drawn snore. I immediately bethought me of the drunken fellow that had so long kept me awake, and I thought it but a fair retaliation that I should now break in upon his slumbers. I accordingly opened the door, and there saw him lying stretched upon his back on the straw of one of the stalls. I roused him up, and with some difficulty made him understand that I wished him to look to the house till the family were stirring. As

when he comprehended me, he swore that "he had nothing to do with the horse, and that he was not bound by any point of law, as recognized by the Code Napoleon, to keep watch in another man's premises. That he would go home, and that he should be very glad to accompany me if I was going the same way with him."

I saw that the fellow was still over-abundantly drunk; and as he said he lived a little bit on one side of the road to Dieppe, I thought it would be rather an office of charity to help him on his way; and I must confess that his assurance of his being able to lead me straight to two coveys of partridges, weighed with me not a little.

We set off together, but we had scarcely got out of the village when all the worst of his drunken and drowsy symptoms came on more violently than ever. He became dead-y sick and pale, and withal so overcome by sleep, that I was absolutely forced to lift him along. He had just sense enough left to point out a little by-lane which turned off, he said, towards the partridges and his home, and in this direction I led him. An hour's walk had not brought us farther than a mile from the village, and I almost despaired of getting the fellow on. He was most abjectly helpless, but I continued my way by this lonely lane, which terminated in a wood, for some time longer, hauling and pulling at my companion, until at length I was out of all patience, and almost wild at observing Ranger make a dead point in the field beside us. Resolved not to be utterly disappointed, I determined on placing my companion comfortably in the ditch, where he might sleep his sleep out, and lie safely, while I went after the birds, until I fell in with some house, or met some peasant to whom I could hand him over in charge. I accordingly placed him high and dry in the ditch, and I then stepped up to Ranger. A brace of birds rose, I fired at them with both barrels, and missed right and left. Away they flew, followed by the rest of a large covey. I resolved to have my revenge, loaded and pursued them; first, however, stepping back to take a peep at my sleeping friend, who presented a beautiful picture of undisturbed repose.

The country now opened out into wide corn fields, and I went on rapidly over the stubble, getting several shots. I at last sought a cottage, and I approached the door to give my intended information, when a girl put out her head, and I immediately recognized her face for a very pretty one that I had observed the evening before in the crowd about the door of the inn, when I arrived in company with, or rather in custody of the gendarmes. She no sooner perceived me than she uttered a loud scream, calling out "the prisoner, the prisoner! The Englishman, the Englishman!" and fled across the field, accompanied by a stupid looking lout about sixteen, with a pitchfork in his hand. Not exactly liking all this, and perceiving that some embarrassment might ensue if I got the reputation among the country people of being a runaway culprit, I immediately turned off towards my right direction, and walked as fast as I could do without giving color to the charge which I was not anxious to labor under.

But in less than half an hour, as I sallied from the wood to the cover of which I had directed my steps, I found myself arrested by the presence of full fifty peasants, male and female, who seemed to have arisen

from the earth to intercept my route. They made most clamorous calls on me to surrender, and on my showing a disposition to resist, they prepared for a general attack. I therefore thought it wise to make a parley, and I promised them to go quietly back to the Three Villages, provided they left my gun unmolested in my hands. This was conceded, and back we went, the peasants pouring out horrible reproaches against me, and evidently restrained by the fear of the Joe Manton from offering violence to my person.

We were very soon joined by two of the gendarmes who had been sent for on the first alarm. I was handed into their charge with shouts and execrations, and to my great astonishment, instead of their immediately liberating me, they informed me I was accused of having murdered a man, the father of the girl who had given the hue and cry, who had just been discovered dead in a ditch, and who was seen to leave the inn in my company a couple of hours before.

I was really very much shocked at this intelligence, and had it not been from indignation at such a charge, I should have given way to those emotions so natural in such a case. But I repressed every thing that might look like an expression of weakness, while I heard the nearest peasants mutter to each other, "Oh the hardened villain!" "Atrocious dog!" &c. During the scene the good people did not a moment forget their provincial peculiarity. They chattered away on every point connected with criminal law, and anticipated every form of my indictment, my trial, and execution. They offered with a common voice to go all as witnesses on the occasion; and one veteran, in order to have the most striking proof of my guilt, proposed that I should be confronted with the dead body. This met with unanimous approval, and the gendarmes consenting, we cut into the little lane, where the corpse was said to be lying in the position in which it was first discovered.

As we approached the spot, and I saw my late unfortunate companion lying on his face in the ditch, a sort of companionable thrill seemed for a moment to shoot through me, and I felt as if not quite justified in having risked a fellow creature's life for the sake of a brace of partridges—but the thought came too late. "Watch him now!" "Mark him well!" "Look sharp at him!" were echoed by the bystanders to each other, as one of them desired me to touch the dead man's hand. I took up one of the dirty paws, which had fallen on one side, and lay in the channel formed by the little stream. "Now look at your victim's face!" cried another. I therefore turned the body round on the back, and gazed a moment on his countenance. It was pale and death-like. The nose, which had in the morning showed a clear crimson tinge at its globular termination, was now a livid purple. The mouth hung open, being naturally of immense proportions. One eye was wide extended—but that one had been long blind from some accident which had contracted the lid and kept it from closing; and the other, which when waking turned from its fellow with a most unusual degree of obliquity, was now firmly shut—a convincing proof to me that the man was asleep not dead. To satisfy myself on this point, I put my hand to his breast, and felt his heart beating gallantly. Quite convinced that there was nothing serious to apprehend, and not being by nature averse

to a joke, I put on a very grave face, and turned away from the ditch. Shouts of conviction followed this movement, and they were so loud that I feared they must have awakened the sleeper. I took a slight peep at him, and saw that his eye-lid did raise itself for a second, but closed again, and all was right.

In a moment a gate was torn from its hinges, and the sleeper laid upon it, covered with two or three cloaks belonging to the women, and away we marched in full procession for the village. When we reached the Mairie it was eight o'clock, and the report of the murder having gone before us, the whole of the little world was out. I, and the gendarmes, and the gate, and its burthen, and about half-a-dozen witnesses, including the daughter as chief mourner, were admitted into the office; and I there found an ill-favored personage of about fifty, with greyish, sleek-combed hair, no front teeth, small feline-like eyes, dressed in a green coat with large mother-of-pearl buttons, a white waistcoat, and black pantaloons, and sitting in an arm chair. This was Mr. Francois Faussecopie. A ragged clerk occupied a seat at the table, which was strewn with blank paper, pens, and ink stands, while a figure which I need not describe, it being that of *Le Chevalier de Choufleur*, stood, with a frightful expression of countenance, and a white handkerchief held to his nose, at the greatest possible distance from the supposed corpse.

While Faussecopie darted some keen glances at me, and put a few questions to the gendarmes, a door opened, and the approach of the mayor was announced; and immediately came in, wheeled in an arm-chair by a servant, enveloped in a brown wadded silk gown, with feet wrapped in flannel, and a black silk cap on his clumsy head, the Right Worshipful Doctor Glautte. Silence being commanded by Faussecopie, the proceedings began. The clerk regularly took down the depositions of the daughter and other witnesses, as to the body being found in the ditch, my having been seen last in company with the murdered man, my visit to his house (for it was his) for the supposed purpose of robbing it, my flight and apprehension.

"Where is the body?" growled Glautte.

"In the corner, here, sir," answered the clerk.

"Wheel me over that I may examine it, ordered the mayor, and he was accordingly wheeled over. The cloak was raised, and Glautte giving one glance at the body, and the ill-favored countenance growing out of it, called out, "Aye, aye, 'tis too true. Dead as a stone, strangled no doubt! Carry him off, and let the undertaker be sent for—for I perceive the corpse cannot keep long."

"That's just what I thought.—Do now like good fellows carry it away!" cried *De Choufleur*, addressing the attendants, and pressing the handkerchief still closer to his nose.

"Prisoner!" exclaimed Faussecopie, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing," replied I.

"Good," answered he, "put that down" (to the clerk.)

"Have you any witness to call?" addressing me again.

"Yes, one."

"Put that answer down," said Faussecopie to the clerk. Then turning to me again, "Prisoner call your witness."

No sooner had I received this command, than I stepped never and stooped down to the sleeping victim, and though somewhat sorry to disturb him, I hallowed out with all my might into his ear, two or three shouts at my highest pitch. The necromantic spell that broke the rest of the sleeping beauty in the wood, could not have produced a finer effect. The dead man bounced upon his feet, opened his eyes, and jumped up with a galvanic spring almost to the ceiling, like the last movement of one shot through the heart. Dismay and horror seized upon the spectators, Faussecopie and De Choaffeur, with the clerk and the wheeler sprang from their seats, and rushed with frightful yells towards the little side door, knocking down chairs and tables, and completely upsetting old Glautte as they tumbled along. The witnesses screamed and rushed altogether towards the street entrance; while the stout gendarmes, fellows that had braved many a battle's brant, caught the infection and rushed out of the room. The supposed corpse, rushed after them, and no sooner did he present himself alive and well to the crowd without, than the affright of the multitude was complete, and the dispersion of the whole mass presented such a scene as may be imagined not told. But to all this most ludicrous bustle, the daughter formed a beautiful contrast. No sooner was she assured that her father lived, than she flung herself round his neck, with no feeling but recovered happiness; and she clung to him, sobbing and crying with joy, in spite of all his astonished efforts to shake her off, and get an explanation of the scene.

The affair ended as may be supposed. Every one came in a short time to his senses. The court resumed its dignity; the tables and chairs and their occupiers were replaced in their proper positions; the crowd dispersed, an immense portion of it following home the drunken dog so miraculously snatched from the grave; and they pronounced the adventure, with one voice, as fit to be classed with the most wonderful of the "*Causes Célèbres*."

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN the confusion had fairly subsided and order was restored, Faussecopie intimated to me with many fawning civilities, that I was free to depart, and having received every assurance that I had no further molestation to fear, and even an offer of one of the gendarmes as an escort on my road, which I civilly refused, I was just preparing to quit the office, when I was arrested and literally fastened to the spot by the entrance of one of the loveliest creatures I had ever beheld, dressed in a plain but most becoming morning costume, and accompanied by an old man of short stature and spare form, but of an air and appearance most imposingly respectable. I need not say that I gazed on Leonie and Mr. Suberville. Several

persons came after them into the room, and as they placed themselves at the bar where he (as my readers know) had so long presided in magisterial dignity, I observed the odd-looking little old beau, (De Chouffleur,) the superannuated Marie, (Glautte,) and the roguish adjoint, (Faussecopie,) all give symptoms of uneasiness, which were evident more or less according to their respective habits of mind. These symptoms, as well as the interest expressed in the countenances of the bystanders, convinced me there was something more than common going forward; and curiosity (a laudable quality in story tellers) determined me to see the issue of the affair. I accordingly got among the listeners, and after a little circumlocution and desultory talking among the parties, the hearing commenced.

The case was stated by Faussecopie, who, though virtually the judge in all the causes which came before that court, had always the cunning to pay the greatest apparent deference to Glautte, and acted as occasion appeared to justify, as the advocate of what ever party might seem to require his aid. In the present instance he avowed himself as acting in that capacity for an injured gentleman, whose poignant feelings of anguish at the wrong he had suffered, quite disabled him from speaking in his own behalf; and to illustrate the touching picture he sketched of De Chouffleur's sufferings, he pointed to him where he sat in a corner, his face covered with his pocket handkerchief, and his toe pointed so as to show his leg in the most pathetic possible position. Having stated the whole progress of the natural affection, (as he called it,) even until the introduction of the heretical impostor, (to call him by no worse name,) into the bosom of Mr. Suberville's family, Faussecopie next began to produce his proofs of Leonie's encouragement of Hippolite's passion. Among these were to be reckoned the great intimacy with the family, the well-known approval of Mr. and Madame Suberville, standing in the relations of father and mother to their adopted daughter; "but more strong than all these," exclaimed Faussecopie, with a tender whine, "are those gentle and delicate tokens which nothing but a melting sensibility could have presented as the reward of the most unshaken faith." With these words he produced a satin-wood casket, and from it he drew forth an elegant little silver thimble, a needle case, and the greater part of a white satin shoe.

At this exhibition an exclamation of astonishment burst from Leonie, and a loud laugh from every one else in the court except Faussecopie, De Chouffleur, and Glautte. The latter, notwithstanding the fillip given him by my adventure, and which was renewed by the presence of Mr. Suberville, was beginning to show the symptom usually produced in him by Faussecopie's somnolent eloquence. The laugh roused him up, and he shook himself, exclaiming, "What's all this? Who dares to insult the dignity of the court? Mr. Adjoint, what does this mean?"

Authority possesses so potent an influence, let it be lodged in beings however contemptible, that my readers must not be surprised at a profound silence having followed this magisterial explosion. And Faussecopie, finding he had the ear of the court, was resolved now to plunge from the precipice on which he saw he was standing, and at once dash

from the keen edge of the ridiculous into the broad ocean of the sublime. He then deposited the "precious love tokens" in the satin-wood case and prefacing his next measure by some severe and pointed observation that really gave to the act an air of reality, he drew forth three letters, which he assured the Malice contained the warmest expressions of love, and that implied promise of marriage, which had induced the heart-broken Chevalier to claim his worship's protection, and appeal to the tribunals of his country for redress. These letters were addressed to De Choissier, and being opened by Faussecopie, and shown to Mr. Saberville and Leonie, they produced an evident sensation, not only in them, but on all the spectators. "It is certainly her hand-writing, I confess it," exclaimed Mr. Saberville. Leonie turned pale and trembled, not at the instant penetrating the plot which was thus laid for her. "Aye, but," said Faussecopie, "here is the misfortune. Those letters written in English to escape detection by the parents of this false-hearted young lady, are inexplicable to the court except through the medium of herself or the worthy man she has so ill-treated."

"Here is the Englishman," exclaimed several voices from those around me. "He can interpret them."

At this proposition Faussecopie gave a doubting glance at Hippolite, (who had grown bolder and flung aside his handkerchief,) as much as to say, "May we venture? Have you read them to me truly?" De Choissier showed a face of great confidence, and I was invited to translate the letters. I consented readily, and began with the last of those which I have formerly transcribed for my readers.

Much interested as I had been for Leonie, and impressed as I was by the conviction that she never could have given the assumed encouragement to such a thing as Hippolite, I was certainly much staggered by the perusal of this epistle, acknowledged to be in her hand-writing. I, however, puzzled by some parts of it, endeavored to reconcile the difference of odium and bad spelling, and proceeded to put it into French, according to the best of my conscience and abilities, as follows:—

"Nuit et jour, matin et apres midi, mes pensees sont a toi. Dans l'Eglise ou a la promenade, dans les profondes mysteres du sommeil, ou en plein jour, c'est toi, mon cher, qui es devant mes yeux."

"Yes, yes!" cried Hippolite, interrupting me, "'tis that precisely, word for word! Oh, what a happy man I am, to have found so faithful a translator."

Faussecopie smiled, and every body stared with astonishment at those tender expressions of love, and no one more than Mr. Saberville.

After some time, order was restored, and I went on.

"C'est toi, mon cher, qui es devant mes yeux la tote courbee par le hart ou je desire vivement d'etre liee avec vous, sans meme la ceremonie d'etre attachee par mes parens. Croyez-moi jusqu'a la mort la tres jolie."

"LEONIE."

I could scarcely finish this sentence intelligibly from the loud shouts of laughter that burst out, and in which Faussecopie, and even Glanville, seemed with difficulty to restrain themselves from joining. Hippolite started up and attempted to snatch the letter from my hand, vociferating that "I was a false and perjured interpreter, bribed by Saberville

and the villainous George Wilson, native of London." The startling inconsistency of this accusation, compared with his praises of the moment before, looked so like guilt of some kind or other, that loud expressions of indignation were poured forth from the inflammable audience, and fifty voices demanded that I should go on with my translation. Faussecopie, determined to keep up a show of justice, even by the sacrifice of his friend, whispered Glauite, who nodded assent, and I was commanded to proceed. I had now come to the postscript, and continued faithfully.

"Mon cousin Alfred fait la potence ;" (here I was interrupted with peals louder than before,) "mais je me marierai avec vous quand mes desirs seront morts."

The uproar of laughter was here at its height ; when Leonie, terrified and bewildered at the scene, sunk on a chuir and hid her face in Mr. Suberville's arms, while Hippolite, in a transport of fury, jumped up on the table, snatched the letter, and swore that what she meant to write, was what my readers will recollect or refer to in Hippolite's translated explanation.

When he had finished, a dozen different voices cried out, "How do you know she meant to say all that?"—"Who put those sentiments into her pen?" And at this moment Leonie, as if struck by sudden conviction, started from her seat, and advancing towards the table, with an air something like inspiration, called out, "Oh, gentlemen, I now see it all! This is one of the old *exercices* the wretch used to dictate to me in the first days of his attendance, when I did not know a word of English! He pretended to burn them all, but I see he has basely preserved some—that is the whole truth of his infamy!"

• However litigious may be the spirit of Normandy, there are no people in the world more alive to an act of base injustice than the worthy plaintiffs and defendants of that province—and these designations include on one occasion or another, the whole population. As soon then as Leonie's honest-breathed explanation struck upon the ears of the listeners, a shout of indignation assailed De Choiseur. He was hooted off the table, and pursued with loud yells of disgust and reproach, as he slunk out of the private door, under cover of Faussecopie's protection. This instigator of the unfortunate Chevalier's attempt put the best face he could upon the matter, protesting that he was quite scandalized at having been the dupe of such an infamous design, and forswearing De Choiseur forever. Glauite was wheeled off the scene, nearly insensible from the agitating accidents of the morning, and the court was dissolved.

Every one of the witnesses of this hurried and rather extraordinary scene offered themselves as a triumphant escort to Mr. Suberville and Leonie ; but he prudently weighed the danger of appearing as the leader of even a village tumult in opposition to the royalist party, and having at best little or no relish for popular applause, he declined the complimentary attendance ; and as the by-standers separated and quitted him in compliance with his wish (all throwing longing glances of admiration at Leonie) he addressed me, and professing himself deeply obliged by my services and attention on the trial, if I may so call it, he invited me to accompany him to his house and pass

the day with him. As it has always been a maxim with me that people should accept every invitation that is well meant, and that does not clash with more material occupations, with a proper feeling of one's own little consequence, or with what one owes that of others, this of Mr. Suberville not coming within any of those exceptions, I closed cheerfully with his proposal, and walked with him and Leonie straight to Le Vallon.

As my readers know the house better than I did at first sight, I shall not describe it; but I must delineate the scene which took place on our arrival. We were met on entering the hall by a fresh-looking lass, in a tight boddice, and stiffened cap, about half the height of her person, whom any one of my readers would instantly have recognized for Lisette, whose face beamed with joy that even my presence could not repress. She called out "Ah my dear Miss Leonie, who do you think has arrived?"

"Who, dear Lisette?" cried Leonie, turning as pale as the best burning wood-ashes, and immediately glowing as red as the self-same sort of ashes when the fire is relighted.

"Who but Monsieur Alfred?" answered Lisette.

"No one else?" faltered Leonie; but before Lisette could reply, a fine-looking youth rushed out of the parlor and embraced Leonie most cordially. This youth was my readers' old acquaintance, Alfred. I hope they will not look so dissatisfied as his cousin did, at not seeing any companion with him.

"All in good time," said he to Leonie's inquisitive and anxious glance—and I say the same to the reader.

"Now my dear Sir," continued Alfred, addressing his uncle, "the negotiation of rather a delicate business has fallen upon a great bungler; but I hope you will excuse my bad management for the sake of my good meaning. I am just going to introduce to you a gentleman with whose name you are familiar, but whose person is strange to you—Mr. George Wilson, of London."

"Strange to us!" exclaimed Leonie with a delighted smile, as she followed Alfred with her eyes, while he entered a room at the right-hand of the hall, the common sitting room which we were entering, being to the left. He returned in a moment, leading in a tall, sallow looking, dark-haired man of about forty years of age, but not, I could plainly see, the person whom Leonie thought she was so sure of. This gentleman explained himself to Mr. Suberville, in an easy flow of sufficiently bad French, and apologized for having lent his name to an imposition, however innocent, but which he now appeared for the purpose of fully clearing up, not only to Mr. Suberville and his family, but to all the world. This was all incomprehensible to me, but I shall tell things as they happened, supposing myself as wise then as I became afterwards, rather than confuse my readers by a detail of my cogitations and conjectures at the time.

Mr. Suberville and Leonie were civil but rather silent; but the strange Mr. Wilson soon roused them to attention, by begging they would permit the entrance of the person who had formerly usurped his name, assumed his appearance, and caused, by his frolic, such manifold annoyance to them.

"Oh then, where, where is he?" Why torture us so? Let him come in!" exclaimed Leonie.

The word *us* was amusingly placed for *me*, as my readers have no doubt observed; but all subterfuges of expression were rendered unnecessary by the out-bursting (from a closet where he had been placed by Alfred) of that handsome young fellow whom my readers have, I hope, been longing to shake hands with once more.

I cannot attempt even to sketch the scene—the transports of the young man—the agitated delight of Leonie—the pleased astonishment of Mr. Suberville—the mixture of awkwardness and enjoyment which I myself felt—the friendly sympathy of Alfred and the real Mr. Wilson—the singing and dancing and crying of Lisette, in the style so common to all the warm-hearted kindly peasants of France—and to crown all, the ringing of bells, and thumping against the floor, which proceeded from the room above, occupied, as I afterwards found out, by Madame Suberville.

"This is really overwhelming," exclaimed Mr. Suberville. "It is almost too much—but it is certainly very like happiness. We must not, however, go too fast. I cannot doubt the sincerity of these emotions, Sir: but tell me, I pray you, fully and frankly, who you are?"

"Who am I?" cried the young man—"ask yourself, my dear good Sir—ask her! Who am I, Leonie? Does not your heart tell you? Who could I be but Edward Mowbray your affianced husband from infancy—not bound by legal promises, but united by the dearest of all ties, by sentiment and passion! Do you not recognize me, Sir? Look here then at these documents—these much-wished-for documents, whose want alone has kept me thus long in the tortures of suspense and suffering—but whose tardy arrival now repays me for all; establishing my identity, and giving me the sanction of a parent's consent to the only step which is now wanting to make me wild with joy!"—

"Hold, hold, Edward!" cried Mr. Wilson—"this is a serious moment."

"And am I not serious?" cried Mowbray, taking Leonie's hand, and, kissing it with rapturous expression.

The secret of a story (where there is one) once openly divulged, or the main point of interest detailed, I believe it is wise in the narrator to compress, and hurry over, and wind up the auxiliary matter as quickly as possible. I shall, therefore, with all due brevity, perform what remains of my task.

From Edward Mowbray's explanation, given with a most laudable rapidity, that, from the first dawning of reason, he had felt precisely the same sentiment, but in a much stronger degree towards him. His father encouraged it, for his views always were to establish Edward in some of the commercial ports of France; and from the strong impression made on him by Mr. Suberville, during his hurried visit, added to all he could collect of his character and circumstances, and his admiration of the child, he actually planned the future union of the infant couple, and he fostered the notion in his son with a mingled paternal and commercial pertinacity. The notion went on,

as we know, until the knowledge of Mr. Saberville's ruin ; and Mr. Mowbray being a man of the world, bred in a counting house, and one of those really fond, but widely erring fathers, who can see no hope of happiness for their children, if it be not built on ignots of gold, felt it his duty to root out every thought from Edward's mind, that led towards the long-cherished object of his future views. To do this, with a youth of eighteen, was, we know, very difficult ; and in the sequel, he found it to be impossible. Edward's temper possessed much of that impetuous obstinacy which is allied with many noble traits of disposition, and he felt to the bottom of his heart, those sentiments which he so briefly and forcibly uttered in the speech recorded just now. These sentiments, born and nurtured in a spirit of romance, so natural to the high-minded native of a land of liberty, had gained strength from opposition. Edward pleased himself with the notion of the singularity of his attachment ; and he so long indulged himself in fancies concerning the little white creature that had been growing up with him, as it were, from childhood, that no real affection for a known object could have exceeded the strength which this acquired. To fix him more steadily to business, and flatter his pride, his father had put his name as a partner into the firm ; but Edward, without being insensible to this great proof of confidence, or the advantages, to be derived from it, always calculated the latter as half for himself, and half for Leonie ; for he was resolved never to abandon his romantic attachment, while a rational hope remained for him to cling to. A first step towards his purpose was to learn French, and this he accomplished by means of an emigrant Parisian, with such ardent attention, that he became a complete adept in the language, and spoke it with great ease and good accent, in a couple of years. One of the articles of his partnership with his father stipulated that he should, on reaching twenty-nine-years, proceed to France to establish himself in that country, as a correspondent branch of the main house at Philadelphia ; but a very dangerous and prolonged illness, which about that time assailed his father, forced him to remain two years more in America. During all this while he resisted every temptation to abandon his boyish, and perhaps I may confess, his wild attachment ; and none but Leonie, unknown, unseen, and perhaps lost to him for ever, by marriage, or even death—none other could make the slightest impression upon him. He was, however, extremely guarded with his father, and so completely, yet gradually, had he declined all mention of her, that, at the moment of his departure for France, the father rejoiced in the belief that he had lost all remains of his early fancy. But he was undeceived before the ship, which bore Edward away, had sailed out of sight of land ; for a letter, written by the latter, and left with a friend to be delivered to his father immediately after his departure, told him, in a strain at once dutiful, affectionate, and firm, that the chief impulse which induced him to quit his home for the first time, and to part with his only parent, was that leading hope of his life—which I need not here dilate on.

His earliest letter from England, where he first touched the soil of Europe, was to the same effect ; and when he proceeded to Paris,

early in 1816, accompanied by Mr. Wilson, one of the partners in a house intimately connected with that of Mowbray and Son, he most fully admitted that gentleman to his confidence. By his agency enquiries were made as to the state of Mr. Suberville's circumstances and situation, with particulars relative to Leonie, Alfred, De Chouffear, and the other persons less intimately connected with Le Vallon. Edward had thus acquired a fund of intelligence, and was devising with Wilson some plan for gaining admittance to the family, when the advertisement in the newspapers caught their attention, and it was quickly agreed that Mowbray should make use of Wilson's name and passport, and disguise himself as he best might, for the support of his assumed character. The success of his stratagem has been detailed, and he was not a week under the roof with Leonie, before he wrote once more to his father, with a vehemence that carried every thing before it. Answers to his letters arrived, but not till he had quitted Mr. Suberville's house, and been more than a month at Paris, enclosing him, as he required, certificates of his baptism, and his father's formal consent to his marriage with Leonie, without which documents the celebration of the ceremony could not take place according to the French laws.

But even these papers did not allow of his immediate return to Le Vallon, for the representation made to the authorities subsequent to his flight, the suspicions attending on it, the persecution of Mr. Suberville, and the proceedings something very like outlawry, against Alfred, formed a host of difficulties which it required great perseverance, no small interest, and much time to overcome. All this may be well understood by those who have had occasion to struggle with the looseness, littleness, and sluggishness that clog the march of even small matters of French government. All, however, through the main exertions of Wilson and his connections, was finally arranged. The whole case was examined into by the prefect of the department, and such a host of circumstances came to light, corroborative of the misconduct of Faussecopie, and the incapacity of Glautie, that the order for Mr. Suberville's liberation, the exculpation of Alfred, and the pardon of Wilson and Mowbray for their infraction of the strict police regulation relative to passports, was followed by a deliberation on the propriety of dismissing the mayor, and the adjoint of the mayor of the commune known to me and my readers by the name of the Three Villages.

When Mowbray had finished his short recital, and the flurry of feelings and flutterings of heart which had agitated the party more or less, had subsided, the first measure of Wilson, Mowbray, and Alfred, was to go to the Mairie for the purpose of presenting themselves and their documents in all due form. They requested me to accompany them along with Mr. Suberville, as a couple of credible witnesses might be necessary in their dealings with such a slippery personage as Faussecopie. When we reached the office, we saw Glautie sitting quite still in his chair, while Francois was pouring out some whispered reasoning in his ear. As we approached the deputy magistrate, he was evidently astonished; but recovering, in a second, his cool shrewdness of look, he examined the various pa-

pers, pronounced all to be right, expressed his happiness at the matter having terminated so satisfactorily; and was just beginning to read a moral lesson to Mowbray on the impropriety of his conduct, when the latter abruptly begged him to save himself the trouble, and required him to regularly register the first formal announcement of Edward Mowbray's and Leonie Suberville's joint engagement of marriage, sanctioned by the consent of their respective parents in all the regular forms of law.

I hope I have not taken my readers by surprise, and that they will not consider this momentous affair too hastily decided on. In case any such qualms should arise, let me entreat them to recollect that the parties were intimately and daily known to each other for four months; and that the legal formalities required a delay of three weeks before that

‘Consumation devoutly to be wished—’

time enough in all conscience for any couple who seriously intended to marry, and who have method enough in their madness to remember that most appropriate of adages, “delays are dangerous.”

At this unexpected announcement Faussecopie positively changed colour: not that I mean to libel that heart's blood of the honest breast, which rushes blushing through the frame, at every generous impulse, or modest agitation. Faussecopie's surfsce showed no such colouring as this; but the bile of his constitution set all its bitterness afloat, and turned the yellow tinge of his cheek into a kind of tawny orange. He paused, faulted red, took up his pen, laid it down again, opened his registry book, and after a shake of the head which seemed to settle his purpose, and having whispered a word or two to his superior, who nodded consent, he protested, that “however anxious he might be to give immediate attention to the natural wish of the amiable and respectable parties, his worship the Mayor felt bound to pause awhile, in consideration of the unsettled claims which another gentleman put forward to the hand of the young lady.”

“Out on this filthy claim!” cried Mowbray, striking the table with his clenched fist, “and dare you as a magistrate, sit here to talk thus? Take care of yourself, sir. And as to your principal, yonder, who dozes while you act, neither he nor you are aware of the danger you are running, from the outraged justice of your country; nor see the naked sword which hangs suspended over your heads.”

At these words, Glautte started up in his chair with surprising animation, cast his eyes upwards and roared out lustily, “A naked sword! Treason, treason, murder! Jacques, Jacques, I say! Wheel me out of this den of thieves—my life is beset—the English are around me,—Long live the King! Long live the Emperor!—Long live the Burbons!—Long live the Republic! Oh, where am I, where am I, where am I! Oh, oh!”

With these expressions, growing more faint at every fall, he sank back insensible in the chair: and while he was wheeled off, Faussecopie made the required entry in proper order; and that was the last act of official duty he ever performed.

Matters now hurried quickly on. Mowbray swore he would go straight to Hippolite, who he ascertained was at Faussecopie's apartment waiting for night-fall to skulk off to his sea-side retreat. We found it vain to oppose him, even had we wished it; but we thought it well to finish the affair. To Faussecopie's lodgings we accordingly went; and it was arranged that Mr. Wilson should enter first, and demand a formal recantation of the abusive paragraph inserted in the newspapers against his name, though not actually meant for him. We waited in the anti-room while he entered; and we could readily distinguish from poor Hippolite's faltering tone, as he replied to Wilson's demand, that he shook in every joint. Thinking, however, from Wilson's calmness, that he might venture to be bullying, or something approaching to it, he refused any recantation, saying that he had no intention of injuring Mr. Wilson; but that he would heap with the utmost odium, the villain who assumed his name and appearance, and who fled from the chastisement that he panted to inflict on him. At these words, Mowbray burst into the room, followed by Mr. Suberville and myself. When Hippolite saw him, he looked with incredible velocity right and left, as if he balanced whether to throw himself out of the window, or dart up the chimney; but Mowbray's rapid advance decided him to take a safer movement, and he betook himself to his old and favorite attitude of supplication. He threw himself on his knees and on Mowbray's mercy—and I need not dwell on the rest. He signed not only a full recantation of his aspersions on "George Wilson, native of London," but also an ample disavowal of all his claims on Leonie; he gave up the fabricated love letters, as well as the precious tokens," to use Faussecopie's phrase, on the possession of which, his assertions had also been founded; and to put a finishing stroke to his meanness, he turned voluntary approver against his accomplice Faussecopie; and being in the confessional vein, betrayed the whole secret of their clandestine tricks upon the revenue.

Armed with these "brief," but very strong "authorities," we all retired; and Mr. Suberville was in the very act of declaring his intention of preparing a whole statement of Faussecopie's conduct, to be forwarded to government, when a messenger met us in great haste, demanding the immediate presence of Mr. Suberville at the Mairie, where the perfect had just arrived for a special purpose, and where death, in his own proper person, was performing the same operation upon Doctor Glautte, which Doctor Glautte had so frequently performed (during his professional practice,) on many a poor patient.

We forthwith retraced our steps to the Mairie, and were received by the prefect, a venerable and respectable looking man, who advanced towards Mr. Suberville with a gracious and cordial demeanor. He had received from government the final directions that Glautte and Faussecopie should be superseded if, upon minute inquiry, he was satisfied of their demerit; and he was ordered to proceed to the spot for the purpose of examining into the affair, announcing their dismissal, if such should be his decision, and replacing them for the present by individuals of his choice, until definite measures could be

adopted. This being the fortunate moment to elench the fact of Faussecopie, and his worthless superior, Mr. Suberville detailed his evidence with much clearness, and De Chouffeur, summoned for the same purpose, deposed to his former confessions. The prefect was prompt in his proceedings. He called in Faussecopie and announced to him in no measured mincing phrase, his dismissal from the trust he had abused. Faussecopie endeavoured to reply, and in proof of his worthiness, betrayed the unhappy, and, as he thought, dying Doctor, by offering to produce his letter offering allegiance to Napoleon during the hundred days, held back, as Faussecopie protested, only through his interference and fidelity to the Bourbons.

The prefect asked him for the letter, which he accordingly produced; but it could not escape the keen eye of Mr. Suberville, who examined it with the prefect, that two or three slight changes in phraseology were evidently in the hand writing of Faussecopie. Not recollecting these, which were done in an habitual movement, no doubt, as he first read Glautte's scrawl, pen in hand, he was, probably for the first time in his life, taken off his guard, and he confessed the fact. But in reply to the prefect's demand why he failed to inform the government of the measure of which he avowed his disapproval, he replied that gratitude towards Glautte had been his motive for concealment. "Gratitude, base man!" exclaimed the indignant prefect, rising from his seat, "How durst you profane a name so sacred! No, it is too late—nothing can save you from well-merited disgrace. Retire from my presence, and hold yourself ready to enter into the simplest account of your two years' conduct in the execution of the sacred office of magistracy, which, like our blessed religion, cannot suffer pollution from the villainy of its ministers."

"Monsieur le Prefect, hear me," cried Faussecopie in a cowering tone, "revering as I do the throne and the altar!"—

"Impious miscreant, away!" reiterated the prefect, "or you will force me to proclaim your baseness by calling in the arm of the police to rid me of your presence!"

The miserable culprit walked out, and, furnished with a passport signed by himself, he quitted the village that evening, and has never since, I hope, been heard of in its neighborhood.

De Chouffeur was stealing off by another door, near which he had been snuffing and crying during the whole of this touching scene, but the prefect stopped him by calling out "Chevalier de Chouffeur, listen! you have disgraced the order to which you belong;" (here Hippolite put the opposite flap of his coat over his red ribbon) "you have sullied your noble blood," (every drop of it rushed up into his face) "but your confessions may claim some indulgence. Unfortunately we have now no Bastille in existence, where a man of birth and station might be quietly shut up and punished without publicly degrading his family and rank. You may therefore escape both punishment and exposure. I shall lay your case before the king. In the meantime retire to your residence, keep quiet and repeat."

"Oho! oho! oho!" sobbed Hippolite as he stole away; and that bitter tone was the last of his that I ever happened to hear. The pre-

feet resolved to suspend all decisions on the affair of Glautte, as his death might save the necessity of his disgrace; but Glautte had not the least intention of dying. He certainly had a fresh paralytic stroke, and was subsequently replaced by a new mayor, a respectable inhabitant of one of the villages; but for aught I know he still lingers on in his miserable dead-and-alive state, without exciting the least regret, and scarcely the least commiseration in the inhabitants.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE probationary weeks, between the legal public engagement and the union of the lovers, were passing rapidly over, and I heartily participated in the sunshine of enjoyment which was thrown around all; for even Madame Suberville had shaken off Hippolite, and was quite reconciled to his rival. I had dropped in, as it were, so aptly into the scene, that my presence seemed necessary to its completion, rather than an intrusion on the chief actors; and while they, on their parts, seemed pleased to consider me in the light of one of those pieces of good luck, familiarly called a God-send; I, in my old way, could not help getting deeply interested, and striving to be intimately informed in the minutest details of their former lives. I do not think I can convict myself of having had the slightest intention of committing any of this to print at the time. How could I? for it never occurred to me to venture *myself* to the fiery ordeal of publication; but merely from an inquisitive turn in interesting matters, I strove to make master of all I could. The result was many a close conversation with such of the parties as were within my reach; and some facts relating to the others I had at second hand. But my great help was in the journal kept faithfully by Mr. Suberville, from his wedding day, in which was recorded (with a regularity and precision quite worthy the emulation of those who are prone to that method of catching folly as it flies, and pinning their insect observations to paper) almost all the leading particulars of my story. I always think it well to state the sources from whence my materials are drawn; and I hope my readers will approve of what appears to me a laudable desire for accuracy.

The castles, cottages, carriages and other constructions, which were built in the air during a fortnight, were very delightful, and fit to be occupied by such enthusiasts as Edward and Leonie. But they were every one shaken to their foundations one morning, by the westerly wind, which blew a gallant vessel into one of the French ports, with a letter for Mr. Mowbray direct from Philadelphia. The plans of the lovers had been hitherto all along running on the happiness of being settled, and established finally at Rouen, in completion of Mr.

Mowbray's plans, with Le Vallon for their country house, laid out and decorated according to their own tastes, and Mr. and Madame Suberville passing with them tranquilly the remainder of their days—I had written years, but it is better to count in the coin most likely to be within the reckoning of mortality. Both the old and the young couple were well pleased with these plans, and it never occurred to them that their arrangements were subject to the chance and change which hover over human projects.

This letter was from the elder Mr. Mowbray, and it stated in substance, that since he wrote last, he had experienced a severe though not dangerous return of illness. That under those circumstances he found himself utterly unable to cope with the perilous cares of business, unaided by the presence of his son. That he considered it essential to abandon for the present, the scheme of transplanting the old trunk of their prosperity, to a new soil; for as to carrying on both establishments, he pronounced it impossible. He spoke of the hope of seeing his son again, with his beautiful bride. He finally prayed him to get married as quick as possible; hoped his letter would arrive in sufficient time to bear his blessing as their accompaniment to the altar, and begged that instantly after they were united, they would embark in the first ship sailing from Havre, and remove all his doubts and fears of their compliance with what he would not call a command, knowing that in giving it the form of a request, he ensured its amplest and most immediate fulfilment.

This caused great and sudden grief to all the parties except Edward, and even he felt strongly for the unhappiness about to be inflicted on Mr. Suberville and his wife. Madame wept plentifully on this occasion, but Mr. Suberville smothered all appearance of emotion, and was the first to say to Leonie and Edward, "You must go." I was present at this scene, and I was certainly astonished at his apparent indifference; but I found afterwards that his feelings resembled flints, which, though possessing coldness and hardness more than common, yet when struck upon by the proper metal, send forth sparks of a brighter flame than softer substances may emit.

To get fast to the end of my story, Leonie and Edward were married; and a week afterwards; having taken leave of Madame Suberville, who was cheated into a belief that they were soon again to return, they set off for Havre to embark for Philadelphia, accompanied by Lisette, who would not abandon Leonie, and escorted to the sea side by Mr. Suberville, Alfred and myself, Mr. Wilson having some days before set out for England.

Our short journey was truly melancholy. I may be well supposed to have been the person least affected, but I really could not witness the scene unmoved. Alfred seemed deeply to regret the loss of his dear cousin Leonie, and his valued friend Mowbray; but there was a manliness in his honest sorrow that kept him up. Mowbray himself with all his happiness, felt as if a heavy cloud were passing between him and the bright rays he had been basking in. Lisette was blubbering without any respite. Leonie sat beside Mr. Suberville; with his hands between hers, and big tears rolling down her cheeks in continuous drops. He spoke not, nor did he weep—then; but

sighs that seemed almost to choke him, burst unceasingly from the old man's breast. In this way we went on wearily, and at the close of the day we reached Havre. The town was in a great bustle, and almost all the inns quite full. For five weeks a constant wind had been blowing directly into the harbor, totally preventing the departure of any one of the many ships that had been gathering both during and before that period. One hundred and fifty sail were thus weather-bound, and many a prayer was daily sent up by the pious, and many a curse muttered downwards by the profligate expectants of a change; the one party invoking a favorable breeze, and the other execrating its delay.

On the evening of our arrival there was a more than ordinary sensation excited, in consequence of some symptoms which pretty certainly announced a change of wind. Many re-embarkations took place, and the ships and the inns were mutually in a bustle. We got our accommodations with much difficulty; and the night passed over heavily enough. When morning dawned all was in motion, for the wind had really shifted to a favorable point, and every hand in the numerous fleet was employed in making ready for the turn of tide, which was to take place at nine o'clock. During this period the quay was a scene of indescribable confusion. What with loading of baggage, pulling of ropes, weighing of anchors, bending of sails, shouting on board the ships, and answering uproar from the porters, boatmen and sailors on shore, and passengers hurriedly embarking, one might have thought it impossible that all these elements of disorder could ever subside into a calm; and it seemed full as difficult that feeling and sentiment should in such a scene find space or leisure for expression. Yet during this bustling interval what scenes of heart-felt sorrow did I see displayed, from objects that seemed to stand isolated and unobserved by all the rest, who each followed the impulse of their own emotions, unnoticed in their turns.

It is needless to dwell here on the painful picture represented by the mass of mourners, who threw such a shade of sorrow over the otherwise animated scene. But of all the groups of wretchedness which caught my view, none possessed for me such acute interest as was naturally excited by the observation of Mr. Suberville and Leonie. All the tenderness of her heart was called forth. All other feelings seemed swallowed up in her grief at parting with her benefactor, her protector, her more than father; she clung to him weeping, while her husband busied himself embarking all their effects, and in consoling Lisette, who sat sobbing on the deck. But Mr. Suberville was the principal object of attraction. For Leonie's grief had a certain solace in the buoyancy of young delight, in the varied scenes of life, just opening on her view, and above all in the ardent love of the partner who was to tread those scenes with her. For Mr. Suberville there was no hope to cheer him up after this sad hour. No youth, no change, no children to revive the spirit of early life, and hold forth a promised charm for its decline. Blank and desolate, all that the world contained of brightness or joy seemed now receding from him, and the pitiless tide that just began to flow away, was like some remorseless monster about to carry off the stay and solace

of his old age. He felt all this, I am sure, for he looked it; and while he clasped his arms convulsively round Leonie's neck, I saw him weep, as if he had been all his life a weeper, although he never perhaps had had a wet eye before that wretched day.

This was not to last longer. Mowbray had taken his manly farewell of us all, Leonie had given me her graceful and friendly adieu, and had warmly embraced Alfred whom she loved so well; but she still stood clasped in the arms that had so oft embraced her, but never as they did now. The sails were all set, the crew in their various positions, the master at the helm; repeated calls, unattended to by the afflicted Suberville, who was losing his all, and the scarce less wretched Leonie, who forgot that she had nought left beside, resounded in the air, and the ship was swinging from the last cable that held it to the pier, when Mowbray leaped on the quay once more, and snatching his wife from the arms that were entwined round her, sprang with her again on board, and Mr. Suberville sunk almost exhausted into Alfred's arms and mine. In a moment more the ship was under sail, and we supported the old man unresistingly back to the inn.

It is not for me to portray his after feelings: Each reader will judge of them perhaps (bad as is the rule) by those which would have actuated himself. For my part I was convinced at the time, that the blow had struck too strongly on his heart ever to be recovered, and deeply commiserating his woe, I could not continue its observation. All my own arrangements for quitting the place having been completed, I bade farewell to the poor sufferer, for such indeed he was, and after a hearty and friendly leave-taking with Alfred, I threw my knapsack across my shoulders, took my gun under my arm, called Ranger to my heel, and walked away from the place. As I passed over the ground so lately the scene of such animation, there was scarcely a living object perceivable. The whole population seemed to have crowded towards the pier, following as far as they could that multitude of gallant vessels going rapidly before the wind. Four or five lately arrived barks lay labber-like in the docks, but not so much as a streamer fluttered from them to speak them "things of life." I hurried seawards, but not by the common track, for I needed silence, if not solitude; and I mounted the steep ascent which rises above the town, and straggled across the hills that overlook the ocean, towards the lovely glen in which the village of Ardaise reposes.

When I reached the topmost level, and threw down my unobstructed gaze upon the broad ocean, I beheld a glorious view indeed. The azure expanse was as smooth as glass. Not a wrinkle was visible on its serene face, which looked as we might fancifully suppose it to have appeared in the first hour of its creation, in the early innocence of the world, ere its surface was heaved up into boisterous waves, or sullied by the wrecks and wretchedness which the winds and the earth sent over it. Widely spread upon this liquid plain was the majestic fleet, the white sails looking like a watery encampment; for where I stood no motion was visible in the ships; nor was their progress to be distinguished on the vast surface where they seemed to stand. They nevertheless moved on, and while they pursued their steady yet imperceptible career, I threw myself on the sheltered bank of scanty herbage.

There I lay for hours musing on the scene, fanned by a soft breeze, which felt like the touch of velvet ; listening to the murmur of the tide, that seemed like the rippling lisp of its earliest voice; and watching the white-wreathed waves, which sank so softly on the sand, that they appeared like snow-flakes melting into its moistened breast.

Little by little the fleet was dissolving from my gaze; yet the confused and shadowy forms of the ships were all the while visible, but they seemed to die away from my sight, as a flight of wild swans which the observer follows in the heavens, till he can only mark their fading forms like the fragments of dim and distant clouds. Without wholly forgetting the more peculiar objects of my interest, Mowbray and Leonie, vanishing thus away, my mind took a range for whose locality not even the wide extent before me was enough. It wandered far across the ocean, to rest on those distant shores where Edward and his young bride were going to pass long years of love and joy; and I thought of the many men who in that very fleet were abandoning their native Europe, to dare the perilous trials of Transatlantic life. I imagined these adventurers in their youthful enthusiasm, giving up every tie of nature, the whole earth before them "where to choose"—not a resting-place—for a young and ardent mind has no right to dream of indulgence and dignity with the name of repose—but whereon to plant the foot of enterprise and raise the arm of independence. I ran over all my old reasoning on this serious subject, and exclaimed to myself as I stood on the heights of Ardaise, "No, let others seek in the New World to realize the hopes of their ambition ; but let him who feels possessed of industry, integrity, and even common powers of mind, who can battle with the heartlessness of men in their general relations with each other, and value the warm worth of individual regard ; who can bear up against the disappointments incident to human life in every clime and country, the false promises of the great, the faint praises of the little—let such a man grapple bravely with that magnificent monster, the civilized world, and he will find enough of honor, faith, and goodness, to cheer him in his struggle, and amply repay him for all his pains."

These opinions did not, however, suit with Alfred Suberville's turn of thought. He panted for America, and felt Europe too narrow for the free breathing of his mind. He gave uninterrupted and tender attention to his uncle, and to his aunt as well, during her lifetime, which terminated about two years after Leonie's departure. Mr. Suberville then at last yielded to the arguments of his nephew, the pressing solicitations of Mowbray and Leonie, and the secret wishes of his heart ; and seeing his beloved country rapidly sinking back under new influences, to that state which all liberal men had hoped was never to return, he converted his little property into cash, and sought in the arms of his long loved Leonie a pillow for his old age, and in the soil of a free country a resting-place for his bones.

Edward Mowbray and his wife were received by his father with the warmth of an affection that only ceased with life. His complaint had taken a serious turn, and after some lingering months of mixed enjoyment and suffering he died, leaving all his fortune to his son. It was then that renewed attempts were made by Edward and Leonie to induce Mr. Suberville to join them with Alfred. He did so ; and

Mowbray, abandoning trade for ever, and indulging a long-cherished desire of more expanded pursuits, retired far from the bustling scenes of life, and has been for some time the proprietor of whole tracts of country on the fertile shores of the Mississippi. There, with his beloved Leonie, the venerable Suberville, the warm-hearted Alfred, and a rising family of children, he already marks the realization of his proud thoughts. He sees himself the founder of a race which may yet spread far across the west, and look back to him in after-generations, with the dim yet powerful reverence which men give to the earliest recorded source of their mingled misery and joy.

NOTE.

The purely domestic portion of the preceding story leaves little necessity and little room for comment. I believe it to be a tolerably faithful picture of domestic manners; nor do I, on reflection, feel myself guilty of having unduly coloured my sketches of individual character. My personages were not altogether creatures of invention. Their "focal habitations and their names" might not perhaps be easily traced in the places laid down in these pages; and the events were possibly arranged more to suit the purposes of the narration than in strict accordance with chronology. But I think that there is at least one Couple on the Continent of America who may have found coincidences between their own adventures and those here related, quite as true to fact as those recorded of many a person celebrated in "History," properly so called.

The reader will probably have observed the altered tone, in the progress of these volumes, with respect to French politics and the Bourbon family. The fair inference to be drawn from this is that the Author wrote in all sincerity; and that the conduct of that family, subsequent to the Restoration in 1815, was such as to destroy all sympathy with it on the part of every disinterested Liberal. The Author

had many opportunities, during a long residence in the French Provinces, of observing the workings of the "Legitimists," as the myrmidons of despot principles have christened themselves; and seeing the political movements of the country with his eyes wide open, he could not hesitate as to the line of opinion he should adopt. A foreigner is sometimes much puzzled between the nice distinctions of party in a country new to him. But if he can establish a real difference between opposing political principles his mind is soon made up. In the present instance the Author found small difficulty; and events subsequent to those here recorded only strengthened the convictions which are even here decidedly apparent.



THE
CAGOT'S HUT.

Affairs that walk,
As they say spirits do, at midnight, have
In them a wilder nature than the business
That seeks despatch by day.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE CAGOT'S HUT.

CHAPTER I.

I must once more, and probably for the last time, transport my readers to the mountainous district which joins France to Spain, and lead them into the scenes and adventures which I traverse again in memory. My recollections of those regions, as vivid as they are various, may enable me to trace with some effect the country and the people; but the associations of feeling connected with the story I am about to relate, press on me in painful and embarrassing confusion.

In the former recitals of my Pyrenean walks, have happily had to sketch but scenes of nature, and acts of men, which, though imperfect in the mass, or individually objectionable, had nothing so revolting as the source of the events I would now record. For *they* had their existence in that of the *Cordon sanitaire*, a memorable establishment, formed for the perpetration of a political crime, which led to thousands of instances of suffering, deeper than those which I, by chance, was witness to.

It was late in the autumn of the year 1822 that I found myself, a second time, and for a short period, in the neighborhood of those scenes which I had visited above three years before, in a milder season and happier times. War and winter were now approaching, hand in hand, and sending out the herald omens of their coming. An army of nearly thirty thousand men, stretch for a hundred leagues from sea to sea, had possessed themselves of the whole range of mountains; and their glittering arms and floating standards scared the wild deer and the eagles, in their most remote and inaccessible haunts. The snow had invaded the hills, and with silent encroachments it came daily downwards, driving the stunted herds and flocks from their

chilled pastures, and covering, like a funeral shroud, the dying beauties of the woods. The shepherds took possession of the plains, but not with the wonted cheerfulness and ease which had, in other years, accompanied their autumnal migration. They had not now the quiet homes of better days, nor could they look forward even to the scanty but undisturbed enjoyments of the winter hearth. Their huts were filled with soldiers; each village was a military post; and besides all the tumult and alarm excited by this change, the whole country swarmed with a desperate rabble, driven out of Spain before the meteor flash of liberty, which gleamed, like the Archangel's fiery sword, on that unhappy land, by nature intended for a paradise.

The fugitive bands of smugglers, monks, and mendicants, and worse even than either, were self-designated "The Army of the Faith;" covering by a bold impiety, the cruelty, bigotry, and cowardice which formed the elements of their compact. A few inflamed fanatics gave an ardent coloring to the rest, and deceived the distant observer by a hue less odious than the reality; but those who saw them closely, have, one and all, agreed in painting them as both vile in motives, and brutal in actions. At the time I describe, they were utterly expelled the Spanish soil, and they overrun the neutral territory of France, in noxious and despicable crowds. The groups of these wretches, hovering on the frontier, had a picturesque atrocity of mien which was in keeping with the savage scenery. Lazy monks, wrapped in their threadbare cloaks and cowls, of brown, or grey, or black—half starved women, with squalling infants, trudging along, shivering and almost naked—the mockery of an encampment of some scores of ragged ruffians, whose military accoutrements alone took from them the air of a gipsy bivouac. Such were the objects profusely spread upon the snow-covered mountains, and braving the blasts by which I myself was assailed, on my track from the Circus of Gavarnie, where I had been satiating my curiosity by a view of the chief wonder of the Pyrenees.

The French army of observation, as the *cordon sanitaire* was newly named, occupied all the passes of the hills, and suffered considerably in their inclement positions. Every hut afforded miserable quarters to some ten or twelve soldiers, and in some places the troops were forced to encamp under tents, which were perpetually blown down, or torn up by stern gusts from the earth. I had many opportunities of observing the gaiety and good humor with which the soldiers bore privations of all kinds. No longer insulted by the ignoble pretence of forming a barrier against the yellow fever, they had thrown off the degrading title which it had procured them; and the whole appearance of things growing daily more warlike, with occasional skirmishes between the Constitutional Spaniards and the insurgent rabble of the Faith, gave a martial character to the scene, that warmed the imagination, and hushed the murmurs of the unfledged conscripts, of whom the army was composed. They were too unreflecting to discover that there was less dishonor in being the means of prevention of a physical contagion, than in becoming the instruments for the overthrow of the first of moral rights. But soldiers must obey, not reason; and a principle of duty, which

applies exclusively to them, absolves them from the odium which falls with tenfold force upon the authority whose dictates they follow.

As no obstruction was at that time given to travellers within the frontiers, I pursued my excursions freely; and though shocked at every step to see the country I traversed forced from the solemn quiet of its natural aspect, I did not neglect the fund for observation afforded by the exotic and auxiliary illustrations which every step presented.

I had visited Gavarnie at that late season, to witness the effect given, by the accumulation of snow, to the cascades which foam over the stupendous rocks that form its gigantic amphitheatre. As this prodigious scene has been over and over described, I shall not make a transcript of the works of others, nor seek a rivalry with them; wishing rather to lead my readers into sites more unfrequented and obscure. I quitted Gavarnie, oppressed I might almost say, by the contemplation of its vast sublimity and appalling desolation. I looked back on its glaciers, its cataracts, and the mighty mounds that tower above them: I suffered imagination to rest awhile on the peaks where Ariosto's genius had bounded uncontrolled—and I turned into the track of common-place events and scenes, lightened of a weight of wonderment that seemed to bow me down.

I threaded the defiles that lead from Gavarnie to Gedro; hastened through the mass of created ruin called Peyrada, or Chaos, where measureless heaps of granite and calcareous rock have been hurled and strewed around by the Omnipotent hand; and I passed with sure, but rapid steps, the edge of precipices, from an attempt to fathom the depths of which the gaze involuntarily withdraws, baffled and dizzyed.

When I entered the rustic inn of Gedro, late in the evening, I found little comfort in the aspect of the place. It, like all other houses which professed to afford refreshment and repose, was completely filled by a motley crowd, composed of French soldiers and Gendarmes, and all the varieties of Spanish vagabonds which I have before mentioned. Outside the house, and nearly blocking up the approach, stood a throng of mules laden with all sorts of rubbish, saved from the ruin of their wretched owners, or pilfered in their flight; and with these were mixed, oxen, sheep, and goats, bellowing and bleating in all the discord of a cattle fair. Within was a scene of brute confusion quite analogous. A large fire, formed of the young bark of the cork-tree and a newly-felled pine, filled the wide chimney at one end of the room. Close to the flame pressed a throng of women, children, monks, and muleteers, their streaming cloaks joining a thick vapour to the smoke from the moist fire-wood and numerous cigars and tobacco-pipes. Several were standing; others sat on stools, and large blocks of stone, or wood: all employed in efforts to warm themselves, or hang on the branches which were crackling but not yet in flames, their gaiters, shoes, and sandals. The woman of the house occupied one corner of the chimney, stooping almost into the fire, while she cooked, on a gridiron of the rudest construction, slices of beef, cut by her husband from the

still warm, and almost quivering-carcase of a cow, that hung in one corner of the room. Some hungry individuals devoured the steaks, as they came tough and blackened, from the hands of the hostess. Others partook of the black bread and onions, which they carried in their wallets; and drank deeply of the wine contained in their goat-skin bottles, or quaffed, from small vessels of horn, the brandy which was served to them by the brood of urchin inn-keepers, which formed the remainder of the family. The Spaniards, who were strictly under the surveillance of the police, paid for whatever they consumed; and the Gendarmes threw many a look of contempt on the military and religious outcasts, as they drew forth their leathern purses and counted down the money, probably obtained by no creditable means.

Among the many wild and bandit-looking figures, one particularly struck me. There was an indolent fierceness, a recklessness of results, a hardened indifference, all speaking together in his marked countenance and careless attitude, as he reclined against a block of wood, and prepared for the disposal of a smoking collop, which one of the boys was conveying from his mother's hands. This man, like all the other members of the Army of the Faith, was unarmed; that is to say, he bore no weapon of legitimate warfare—musket, sword, or pistol; all these being taken from their persons, as soon as they passed the Spanish lines and sought refuge behind the French army. Throwing open his cloak, which was wrapped in several folds round his body, I saw his broad leathern belt, on the unfilled cavities of which he seemed to throw a speaking look of regret for the arms that should be there. He, however, drew from his side pocket a knife, and opened a blade of poignard shape and length, with which he commenced to cut his meat, and the piece of coarse brown bread that was placed before him. While he fed, grossly and greedily, he might have been thought to have had all his ideas centred in the indulgence of his appetite; but I distinguished a sinister glance at times, which seemed to search for the observation of which he appeared so careless. His viands all despatched, he drew from the pocket of his loose breeches a flask, containing some liquor, most probably brandy. He slowly uncorked it, leant back his head, opened his mouth wide, and holding his hand high and steadily, he poured with great precision the continuous stream of liquid, not spilling a single drop, and thus swallowing the whole without once closing his lips, or letting them touch the bottle, a method of drinking very common to the Spanish peasants. He then handed the empty vessel to the boy, to have it replenished by his father, and unrolling the scarlet cotton sash, which girded his body, he drew a ring from off its innermost end, and took some small pieces of coin from this secure substitute for a purse. Under the inspection of a corporal of Gendarmerie, who acted as a commissary on the occasion, he paid his reckoning, and deliberately arranging his sash, wiping his knife blade, and replacing it in his pocket, he lighted his cigar, placed it in his mouth, and then wrapped the folds of his dark brown mantle round him, and stretched himself on the floor, where he soon slept, or pretended to sleep.

It was next my turn to receive some portion of the homely fare, which was furnished to me and Ranger in very scanty rations, and served up as uncouthly as possible. Every thing was, however, made more palatable to me by the civilities of the corporal, and more particularly by the attention of a sergeant of infantry, a spruce, dapper, consequential, and kind-hearted fellow, who, soon discovering my nation, exerted all his influence to procure me good treatment from the people of the house; and, in order to protect me from the contrary at the hand of the Spaniards, addressed me as if he thought me a true believing Frenchman, instead of an English heretic. England being held in unlimited hatred by those with whom I was forced just then to herd, the strictest precautions were requisite on my part to preserve the character thus assigned me.

While I made the best of my bad supper, and Ranger devoured his share, growling all the while at two or three half-starved curs, that made envious but vain efforts to snatch away the precious bones he was cranching, the sergeant entertained me by a fluent string of observations on the surrounding groups, and anecdotes touching the service in which he was engaged. He was a fair specimen of a French soldier, vain, mercurial, good natured, as was discoverable at sight—generous, humane, and brave, as the sequel of our acquaintance fully proved. He had served in Spain during the late war, and he piqued himself highly on his knowledge of the people, and also of the language, which he assured me he spoke “quite like a Spaniard—the same thing.” But that little flourish he took a very early opportunity of disproving, by a sentence, execrable in idiom, accent, and pronunciation, addressed to one of the women who sat near us. It took effect, however, just as well as if it had been pure Castilian—for it was a compliment; and the woman rolled out a reply at the little sergeant from her voluble black eyes.

“Divinities, these Spanish women!” exclaimed he, slapping one hand against his own thigh, and the other on my shoulder, “Ar’n’t they, my friend?” And before I, his friend, could answer, he ran on—“Aye, that they are, dear creatures! Gods! how I have adored them—risked life and fame for them thousands of times—fought for them, robbed for them, broke parole for them—every thing, in short, but ran away for them; that I *could* not do, for I am a true Frenchman; but *sacré! peste!* I would have done even that—if I *could*. Look at that black-eyed Venus there—never was an eyebrow or the tip of a nose so like my Franchetta’s, the little nun I carried off from the convent in Salamanca.—And may I die, if that rough-muzzled fellow, who lies there with the cigar asleep in his mouth, isn’t the very model of her brother, whom I killed as he strove to stop our flight.”

Had I encouraged him, he would no doubt have found in every individual present a resemblance to some one who figured in his thousand feats; but wishing to discourage his personalities, I strove to turn his attention to a topic that might lead not abruptly from the one he handled.

“What do I think of the Spanish troops?” said he, repeating my question, “why, that they are not worth a thought. The weakest battalion of ours would beat their best brigade, if one can say *best*

grammatically, where all are bad : but never mind niceties—what one learns in a college one loses in a camp.—But, as I was saying, they *do* fight like twenty devils, behind a wall, or a chevaux-de-frise—Saragossa for that. They say death is on the point of a Guerilla knife, and hell at its hilt—because, from hell there's no redemption. Heaven preserve us from their treacherous blades ?”

“What,” said I, such a one as our lazy comrade there carved his supper with, just now ?”

“Ay, that and the like of it, they are as sharp as wit, and as cunning as a serpent—they slip down from a sleeve and into one's flank, without so much as a flash in the pan to give notice ; and that very fellow, you may take my word for it, could rip a man open as dexterously, as our host there slices that cow.”

Just then, my eye fell on the swarthy face of the Spaniard, and I thought I could discover *his*, slowly and slyly half opened, and turned for an instant on the sergeant. The latter proceeded :

“Ay, take *my* word—you may safely—on whatever concerns Spain. I know them well, or *who* could ? I have fought, drank, gassed, with the men, and, ah, God help you ! what have I *not* done with the women ! I suffered much in that damnable, delicious land—but, ye gods, what have I enjoyed ? Do you know, my friend,” continued he, “that of all my unfortunate days, since I first passed through Perpignan, that on which I was taken prisoner at Barossa was the worst ?”

“No doubt,” replied I, “liberty is the greatest of losses.”

“Liberty ! not a bit of it—I didn't care a fig for liberty—a duogeeon is a heaven to a man of sentiment, if he has with him but one memorial of love.”

“Then you lost all your baggage ?”

“Baggage ! ay, that I did—clothes, money, watch, all—but what of that ? A man of mind enough to be a philosopher can be naked without a want ; but the journal of my amours ! Devil take me if the loss of it does not drive me almost mad, even now.”

“The *what* ?” asked I.

“The journal of my amours—the record of my intrigues—the list of my conquests—the names of my mistresses ! that was the treasure, the dearest, the most precious to a man of honor ; and I lost *that*—Oh, heavens ! that which compromised the reputations of the loveliest women, and the noblest houses of Estramadura and Castile !”

The sergeant here quaffed, in solemn silence, a goblet of sour wine, to the memory of his mistresses and their buried reputations, no doubt. I found the subject so pathetico-ludicrous, that I could neither laugh nor cry, but, with, I fear, a half and a half expression of sympathy and amusement in my countenance, I entreated the sergeant to be consoled.

“Yes, I will,” exclaimed he, “*sacre bleu* ! what's the use of sighing ? The world's young yet, and why be sad on the very threshold of life !”

I liked the sentiment : and reasoning on the corporal's scale, I was pleased to flatter myself, that were he only on the threshold, I had

not reached the portal. For the sergeant was certainly full forty years of age ; and bore many of those invidious marks on his temples and cheeks, which may be called the mortal *termini* that denote the distances on the downhill path of life.

The different groups, of either sex and every age, were now huddled together, without respect to place or persons. Each took care of himself or herself respectively. Neither the women nor the ecclesiastics had any precedence given them as to choice, nor did the children meet any tenderness of regard ; but each took possession of a sheep skin, a blanket, or whatever else was convertible to the purpose of covering or repose.

"Every one for himself, is the motto here to-night, you see," said the sergeant, "and you must not swim against the stream. As for me and my party, and my honest friends, the Gendarmes here, we have our quarters hard by, in a very well arranged, barrack-sort of barn. I cannot take you there with me, and I don't like to leave you in this company, within reach of these pot-bellied monks, and long-knived Guerillas. I must endeavor to get you a bed—bad enough I fear—above stairs. Wait a bit." And so saying, he rose, and went to settle the point with the host and hostess.

During the few minutes occupied in the negotiation, I had time to cast a glance on the thirty or forty human beings scattered around. Almost all had yielded to fatigue, and slept soundly, as testified by a full chorus of snoring, in every possible key ; varied as I, perhaps maliciously, fancied, by the thick drawn sighs of the monks, as they lay stretched in close contact with the females of the party. The broad glare from the chimney, and the dingy gleams of a couple of coarse lamps showed the whole scene in a light that was in perfect keeping with the objects it brought to view.

In consequence of my being so warmly patronized by the sergeant, I was treated with great civility by the host and his wife, who immediately complied with the demand for a bed above stairs—in the same room they occupied. And having wished a cordial good night to my military friend and his companions, who now retired to their quarters, I gladly mounted the narrow stairs, that led me at all events one degree higher than the society I had been too long mixed with.

A tottering screen formed a division, for decency's sake, between me and my hosts ; and I threw myself upon the bed, glad to stretch my limbs, though with little hope of sleeping, on a palliasse from which more than half its original stock of straw had been taken to supply forage for the horses belonging to the Gendarmes.

CHAPTER II.

After a couple of hours' persevering efforts, I gave up all hopes of sleeping; and as the next most rational way of passing the night, I betook myself to reflections—of all sorts, poetical, moral, and so forth, but to no purpose. My thoughts ran restive and unmanageable, and rioted in utter confusion. They were as if blown about by the wind that roared around the house, rushing from the mountains, in gusts that seemed emulous of the voices of the wolves that kept tune with them. The rain poured down in torrents—the doors and window frames rattled—the house shook to its foundations—the animals in the yard lowed and neighed—their bells jingled—and the nasal signals of the sleepers in the room below came up through the liberal chinks of the unceiled floor, to complete the discordant chorus.

In this tumult of sounds, I strove to amuse myself by a comparative classification of all their varieties. I listened attentively to distinguish and separate the tremulous whine of the children, from the heavy breath of the women, the hoarse snore of their fierce mates, and the corpulent grunt of the fattest of the monks. I even thought that I now and then caught a murmured exclamation, warmer than prayer; and my ears did not deceive me in bearing me the echo of some of my friend the sergeant's, high-flown compliments, winging their way in soft whispers to the very heart of the dark-eyed Arragonese—for the cunning sergeant confessed as much to me afterwards and also that one great cause of his kindness in placing me in the garret, was to get rid of an obstruction from the kitchen. Thus goes the world!—and thus passed the night.

My host and hostess were stirring long before the lark, and even ere the eagle shook the night showers from his wing, and sent his sharp gaze down the valley in search of prey. I arose with the dawn; and the restless company below stairs were employed betimes, in prayers, and imprecations, and demands for food. The nauseous bustle of the preceding night was evidently about to be re-acted; and I became impatient to make my escape from the scene. Looking from the window, I saw that the morning promised naught but dreariness. The valley, so lovely in summer, was now almost wholly flooded, and the Gave, which had its source in the cascade of Gavarnie, rolled foamingly along its swollen bed, and threatened to tear away the little bridge which was just opposite the inn. The only signs of animal life were a troop of Izards, which had been driven down from the hills by the storm, and were wildly gazing across the valley—and the figure of an old woman of miserable mien and corresponding attire, standing in the road in front of the house. Her stature was low, her complexion cadaverous, her eye sunken, and her countenance bore in every trait the imprint of disease and want. Her feet and legs were bare; a short petticoat just covered her knees; and over her head and coming half way down her back, was a blanket, or piece of

coarse and filthy cloth. This she held folded round her waist, but as it lay open on her throat it exposed the hideous olive-colored swelling called a *gaitre*, which protruded all around, and joined the lower jaw and chin, giving to the whole face an air of shapeless deformity. I knew enough of the Pyrenees and their population to be certain that I gazed upon a *Cagot*.

Aware of the abhorrence entertained towards this unfortunate race by the natives of the country, I rather hurried the preparations for my descent, for I thought it not improbable that some aid might be necessary for this poor object—one of the fittest for protection or charity, because a prey to the prejudicial bigotry of mankind.

When I got down stairs, the whole assemblage was in motion, but none of them looking much improved by their night's discomforts. The host and hostess, with their children, male and female, were busy in attending to the calls of their rude company. Three or four Gendarmes and soldiers were lounging in their grey great coats about the door; and in front of it, as if immoveable, stood the melancholy piece of human statuary which I had witnessed from my window. I should have thought, from her appearance and attitude, that she was expecting alms, which she had not the courage to demand, had I not to my great surprise observed a piece of silver in her hand, which she held a little in advance of her body and towards the house.

The first of the party within who seemed to notice her, was a little girl of about ten years old, one of the children of the Spanish refugees; and no sooner did her eye fix itself on the appalling figure, than she uttered a scream and shrunk back beside her mother, a swarthy Biscayan dame, who came forward to examine into the cause of her daughter's alarm. She, in her turn, on perceiving the old woman, shrieked and shrunk back; but snatching her child forwards again, she made her look steadily on the object of terror, while she assisted her in thrusting the thumb of her right hand between her middle and fore-fingers, thus putting forth the counter-charm against the evil eye, which is the summary substitute for the bracelet sometimes worn, called *manesita*, a little hand of ivory or stone, considered the legitimate amulet against witchcraft for human beings, as the paw of a mole is for mules and horses.

The cause of alarm now spread among the Spaniards, and they hurried towards the door to see the detested dealer in magic. Exclamations of horror, invocations of saints, and threats of punishment were loudly uttered on all sides; and I began to apprehend some violence to the poor old wretch. But two persons, of more authority than I had any claim to, stepped forward to her protection, at the same time with me. The first of these was my friendly sergeant, who came from the barn, his foraging cap placed sprucely on one side of his head, and his great coat hanging loosely with a rakish air. As he advanced, he took off his cap and made a low bow of former civility to the Arragonese woman—giving me a knowing wink at the same time, as much as to say he might have been more familiar if he chose it. While I stepped out into the road and stood near the poor *Cagot*, he commenced a harangue to the muttering Spaniards, foremost among whom was the ruffian who had chiefly attracted my notice the night before.

"Come, come, my good friends of the Faith, be pacified," cried the sergeant "Neither religion, courage, nor gallantry permits this. This poor object is a Christian and a woman to boot, do you know that?"

"A Christian!" gloomed the Spaniard, "she is a witch."

"Not at all, my friend; you deceive yourself; witchery in France is practised by females much younger than she—and in Spain too, if I may be permitted to say," pulling off his cap again making a general bow to the ladies who surrounded him, and every one of whom under fifty honoured him with a smile.

"Let her begone, then," said the Spaniard, pale with rage or fear—"let her turn her cursed glance from the children of the Faith—er!"——and with this emphatic monosyllable, he laid his hand upon the handle of his knife.

"What!" exclaimed the sergeant, briskly, all the better feelings of manhood being roused—"What! would you dare to threaten! since coaxing won't do, we must try other means, I see. Do not attempt to draw out that vile weapon. I believe I ought to take it from you altogether—but if I allow you to carry it to cut your bread and meat, that's all. Dare but to speak of it, much less to wield it, in hostility to—sought that is French, and by heavens I'll have you rolled from the topmost peak of our frontier hills down into Spain again, just as you and your fellows roll down the bales of woollen which you smuggle from one side to the other!"

This burst of eloquence and the metaphor which finished it, produced the desired effect on the scowling ruffian, who slunk back into the house, brushing irreverently past one of the monks who came forward to appease the sounds of discord, and interfere in favour of the unhappy cause of the quarrel. This monk, who had hitherto escaped my notice, was nevertheless a remarkable figure. He was young, tall, sallow, with an eye that protruded ardently, as if propelled by the frantic enthusiasm which evidently filled his brain. He wore a dark brown cassock, with a cross of white woollen on the breast, the Capuchin uniform, and a broad brimmed hat banded by a string of beads. A rosary hung at his right side, and a long sabre, in a brass scabbard, which he had contrived to conceal from the searchers, was exposed at the left, in his energetic movement he flung aside the folds of his drapery. He rushed into the road, and with gestures of animation and sincerity he threw his arms before the forlorn figure of the Cagot, and fervently addressed his compatriots in her favour. Whether his harangue or the sergeant's was most effective, I do not pretend to say, but the Spaniards all retired sulkily to the house; and the priest finished his office of charity by slipping a small piece of money into the Cagot's empty hand, unmindful of the larger one which she still held in the other.

During the progress of this scene, the Cagot never changed her position, nor seemed conscious that the bustle applied to her. It was evident that long suffering and degradation had bowed her down too low, to let her believe herself of even sufficient consequence for the crosses that were heaped on her, much less for the interest she excited.

"Here, old brute," most brutally said the woman of the inn, speaking from the window; "take back your basket, give me the money, and be off with your unlucky looks—a curse is upon you and your odious race." The poor Cagot moved quickly to the spot, took her basket of provisions, and gave the piece of money, which was received with contemptuous caution by the woman, as if its very touch carried infection. The wretched purchaser, thus spurned and trampled on, murmured a blessing on her insulters, probably the mechanical effect of her accustomed terror, and turning her back to the inn, she quitted the village, at a pace much quicker than I could have supposed compatible with her emaciated limbs.

A continued-sleet and piercing north wind, combined to render the morning most uninviting for pedestrians like me and Ranger. As he sat shivering by the door, exchanging looks of curiosity and wistfulness with the Spaniards beyond the valley, he showed no symptoms of an inclination to go abroad. I had quite as little; but I could not reconcile myself to the fate of passing even a portion of the day with even a portion of the occupants of the inn. I therefore resolved to brave the inconveniences of the weather, and to strike off into some of the valleys out of the beaten track to Pau, for which town I knew the Spaniards to be bound. I very seldom took a guide during my desultory rambles in the mountains; but on this occasion I thought it necessary to have one, until I should fall in with some farm-house or cottage, that would afford me a night's shelter. I therefore proposed to the innkeeper's eldest son, a stout lad of about fifteen, to take me under his charge; and he readily accepted the office, for the promise of a slight remuneration. He was, however, obliged to assist in serving breakfast to the Spaniards, and in preparing the mules and horses for such as meant to pursue their journey, before he could enter into my service; and I was thus forced to delay, much beyond the time required to despatch my bowl of chocolate, with rye bread, fresh butter, and a slice of cold dried *saucisson*, altogether an excellent breakfast.

Several of the Spaniards, men and women, straggled off on their wandering course, among them the chief ruffian, who (as he lounged away alone and apparently unallied with any of the party) threw one gleam from the smothered fire of his eye on my friend the sergeant.

"Adieu, comrade," cried the latter, gaily, "should we ever meet again, I will thank you for that parting glance."

"Perhaps we may," was the reply.

"Perhaps," echoed the sergeant.

"That's not very likely though," said I: "chance meetings of this kind are not to be looked for again; and I for myself am sorry to say good bye to you, with not much hope of an opportunity of returning all your civility."

"Who knows?" replied the sergeant: "we soldiers lead a roving life in these mountains now-a-days. I am going off to-morrow myself to one of our most dreary out-posts, and we may stumble upon each other once more before you quit the country. Good bye, Sir, good eye! Take care of yourself, and if you meet that scoundrel, pray leave him one side of the road clear for his own company."

We shook hands and parted, he turning all his attentions to the Arragonese woman, who made no preparations to leave the place ; and I taking to the road with my guide and my dog, in one of the worst moods for travelling that a man could possibly experience.

In pursuance of my plan, I struck into the valley of Heas, which lies to the eastward of Gedro, for the double advantage of being sheltered from the north wind, and of examining the chapel, dedicated to the Virgin, which stands in that lonely vale, and which on two days in the year is the scene of a pilgrimage composed of a multitude of pious peasants from all parts of the mountains. The entrance of this valley promises beauty and variety of scenery, being planted with elms, ash, and maple trees, ornamenting rich pasturages at each side of the river, which, like all those in that part of the country, bears the common name of Gave. But after a short time all becomes dismal and desolate beyond description. Neither tree nor shrub of any kind relieves the monotony of this desert. Masses of shattered rocks encumber the plain, and one huge block was pointed out to me by my lively guide, called by the name of *Caillou de la Raille*, held in considerable veneration as a resting-place at which all the pilgrims who visit the desert chapel stop to say their prayers—at the foot, if they are old and infirm ; on the summit, if they have youth and activity sufficient to allow of their scrambling up.

About half way in the valley, but before we came in sight of the little chapel, an opening to the right displayed the dreary valley of Estaube. There was something inexpressibly and unaccountably attractive in its sombre and desolate appearance ; a spell-like influence that leads one on, in wonder at the frame of mind which makes men court such naturally repulsive scenes. The day was in unison with the dreariness of my feelings, and this desert vale associated well with it. I asked my guide where the road led to ; he replied, "To the foot of *Mont Perdu*." The very name of this mountain was so truly in accordance with the whole scene, that I at once resolved on traversing the vale ; and I was more firmly fixed in my determination, when in answer to my inquiry, if there were any habitations in that direction, he said, "Yes, a few huts belonging to the Cagots."

Since the adventure of the morning, my mind had continually reverted to all I had ever read or seen of that unhappy race of beings proscribed by the prejudices of men from all the rights and attributes which should be common to all, and bearing in the loathsome deformity of their universal disease a virtual badge of infamy, which seems placed on them by the hand of nature itself. As I walked on, I conversed with my intelligent companion about these unhappy people ; and while my reader may suppose me to be moving onwards through the sad defile, over hung by black and livid clouds, and parched by the frozen breath of the keen and cutting wind, I will sketch in another chapter as much as I then knew of the poor people with whom I was about to make a more practical and intimate acquaintance.

CHAPTER III.*

Lost in the labyrinth of time and defying all traces of history and tradition, there has been for ages, in the Pyrenees, a race of beings whose very existence is an enigma that never can be solved. They are scattered in Bearn and Navarre, and the valleys of Bareges, Aure, and Luchon, and some of the minor and almost nameless gorges of the mountains, are frightfully populous with these living libels on humanity. They are without exception, deformed, infirm, imbecile; articulating imperfectly; afflicted with incurable and monstrous *goitres*, and uniting together the smallest possible portion of mental power, with the utmost excess of bodily degradation.

The curiosity of the historian, and the compassion of the philosopher, are alike excited by the existence of this unfortunate people, who are not confined to the Pyrenees alone, but dispersed along the western part of France for nearly its whole extent, and in every respect similar to the *Cretins* of the Valais. The derivations of their name are as confused as the traces of their origin; but they have been every where and at all times the objects of the same abhorrence, and the victims of the same inhumanity. In the solitudes of Lower Brittany, they were in the most distant times treated with savage cruelty. In periods more civilized, the parliament of Rennes was obliged to interfere to procure them the rights of sepulture. They were then and there called *Caceus* and *Ca-queux*. The Dukes of Brittany fixed on them a badge—that last and worst mark of slavery and tyranny combined; for pointing out the victim to all the excesses of injustice, it seems to imply impunity to the baseness that is ever too ready to inflict them. In the Island of Maillezais, near Annis, they are found under the name of *Colberts*, synonymous with slave. In Guienne and Gascony, where they are called *Calets*, the desolate swamps and arid deserts afforded them an almost unsupportable refuge. In Navarre they were sometimes designated *Caffos*, and, finally, in the ancient Comminges, Bigorre, and Bearn, as *Cagots* or *Capots*, they were reduced to the very extremes of indignity and persecution. There they were, in the fourteenth century, publicly sold as slaves; there, as elsewhere, looked on as infamous and accursed; admitted into the churches by a separate entrance, with seats apart, and even a distinct *benitier*† adapted for their use. In many places the priests would not admit them to confession; seven of their number were considered only equivalent to one witness from any other class; they were forbidden to walk with feet or legs uncovered, for fear of imparting contagion; and they bore on their wretched dress their distinctive badge, the feet of a duck or goose, implying no doubt, some insult now not easy to understand.

*The following are the authors to whom I am indebted for the materials of this chapter: Ducange, De Gebelii, De Marca, Ramond, and Palas-sour.

† The vessel which contains the holy water.

Manners less harsh, and the gradual spread of knowledge which must ever carry toleration in its track, have somewhat tempered the rigor of their fate, and softened the aversion of the other inhabitants of the countries they are found in. But still the extent of their degradation is proportionate to the changes which have affected every other community. No census of their numbers has ever been taken, as if their very existence was a disgrace, as it is indeed a reproach to the country. They are not allowed to carry arms; nor suffered to exercise any trade but that of a carpenter or wood-cutter, which are considered as ignoble as they are themselves. Every mean employment is confined to them; malady and misery are their only heritage; and if law does not set its seal upon their brutalized condition, a proscription as powerful has stamped it with a fiat that seems as irrevocable as the wretchedness it perpetuates.

We thus see them as they are, a race of slaves, of whom the origin is lost in the gloom of the dark ages; a rejected caste, enveloped in a mystery which no research can penetrate, amongst whom tradition has perished with the rights and dignities of man, and which presents a sad and silent monument of those times which have transmitted to us naught but what is odious and deplorable. The people of the country, antiquarians, and the poor wretches themselves, are equally ignorant of the source of their indignities, and the epoch at which they commenced. Conjecture and fiction have united in going back to the remotest periods and ascribe to the ravages of leprosy the horror which its victims inspired; but it was but lately that any attempt was made to reconcile to reason the surprising conformity of name and fate, which distinguishes the various tribes of a people separated by distances so great and so long and so utterly without communication with each other.

The *Cagots* of all France must have had a common origin. Some one great cause must have banished and fixed them to the most obscure and barren places. Some signal act of vengeance, some wide-spreading, national outlawry, must at once have aimed at the very extermination of the whole. Whether sudden, or continuous, it must have been great and general; imprinting at once upon all France the same sentiments of hatred, fixing on the proscribed the stamp of the same reprobation, and loading them with the opprobrium of a common name, the universal signal of horror and contempt.

But examining the causes to which this fate was formerly ascribed, it can scarcely be believed that these poor people owe their existence to a tribe of Lepers, banished from the haunts of health and happiness. Lepers were frequently exiled, and confined within the limits of their own infection, but never sold or bequeathed. Nor is it probable that they are descended from a portion of the Gauls, reduced to this state of debasement by the barbarians who succeeded the Roman power. Under the Goths and Franks, the condition of the Gauls presented nothing like this state of unmitigated infamy. It is the aversion that remains to be explained, not the tyranny. Slaves may be spurned, but the *Cagot* was proscribed. It is the mixture of vengeance and contempt, which is so inexplicable for cruelty in common-place; and hatred, like the eagle that carries up

its prey, to dash it down to a more certain death, seems to elevate the object it is about to destroy. The misery in question must have had its source in some feeling more deep and deadly than is to be fathomed by vulgar conjecture, or ambiguous research. It is therefore that all authorities are unanimous in ascribing it to the effect of some such event as the conflict of two ferocious nations—a barbarous invasion punished by barbarians—or the terrible reaction of slavery against oppression.

But five centuries of massacres and devastation, rife with bloody battles, oppressions, and treasons, where crimes and miseries succeeded each other in atrocious monotony, leave all in doubt and confusion, as to the epoch or the event. The east, the north, and south had in their turns, poured upon Gaul a multitude of hordes, all sprung from Upper Asia, but subdivided and modified, and at length utterly forgetting their common origin and relationship. Of these barbarians, the last which burst from their eastern homes were the most barbarous. They pressed on those which went immediately before, who in their turn drove on their predecessors. Alani, and Suevi, and Vaudals, gave place to the Goths and Franks; and, stopped by the Western Ocean, they doubled back upon their course and ravaged Gaul. The Huns came next, accompanied by the Herules, new tribes of Alani, and another race of Suevi. All were confounded together in Gaul, which seemed to be the boundary of their incursions. Then from the North came the Saxons; new Vandals from their side; and the people of Germany, the most confused mixture of all these confused masses, precipitated themselves into the universal tumult; and the divisions, dispersions, annihilations, and reproductions of races were complete.

At length, an issue was discovered on the side of Spain. A furious torrent of men rushed out between the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean: and in the midst of new massacre and new confusion, they found out the road to Africa, where they came into contact with the Romans, battled successfully against the last struggles of their power, and reposed on the ruins of their Empire, when a fresh inundation burst from the south upon the west. The ferocious Vandals, now emasculated by pleasure, wealth, and luxury, were shaken and overthrown; while the Moors, following up their course, swept before them the Goths of Spain, and, led by the fierce and redoubtable Ben Nazir, fell with their whole weight on the Empire of the Franks, by whom they were finally checked and overthrown.

And which, amongst this multitude of tribes, must be selected as that which has been condemned to bear, for generation after generation, the progressive miseries and marks of degradation? Hardly may we distinguish by the flickering lights of history, the victors in these perpetual conflicts—how then are we to trace the ruins of the vanquished? Does the outlawed caste which we now treat of descend from the remnant of the 800,000 men reputed to have been slain in the plains of Orleans in 451, when the Huns and Ostrogoths were destroyed or dispersed by the Visigoths, the Gauls and Franks?—or from the Visigoths, defeated twelve years later by Childeric?—or from the fugitives of the memorable battle of Vougle, in 507,

which cemented the foundations of the throne of Clovis?—or finally, from the deplorable remains of the multitude of Saracens, almost annihilated in the eighth century, by Charles Martel, in the neighborhood of Tours?

These are the questions successively propounded by the authors who have given their attention to this interesting, but hopeless speculation. Opinion may fix itself with equal probability on any one of these transactions. The theatre of all these grand defeats was near the centre and western parts of France, giving equal facilities to the different directions which the vanquished followed in their respective flights. The number of the combatants on all these occasions renders conceivable, at least, the extent of country covered by their dispersion. The general feeling which animated France, upon the occasion of these momentous events, may explain the equality of wretchedness entailed upon each separate portion of the proscribed. But difficulties arise in the various natures of the different sufferers in these defeats, which forbid the application of the same reasoning to all of them alike.

It would too much extend the subject, which this brief sketch is intended to simplify and not confuse, were I to transcribe the various reasonings which exist upon each favorite opinion, which gives the preference in this inquiry to the Goths, the Alani, or the Moors.

The total incertitude in which the question is enfolded renders it one of hopeless investigation, and the only object to be gained in pursuing it is amusement, at the proofs which each writer discovers for his favorite theory, and the objections he invents to that of his opponents. No glory can be at any rate acquired for these unfortunate people in proving them descendants of any race from whom they must have degenerated, and a mass of retrospective disgrace must be thrown upon the memory of any people, in supposing them at any time to have borne such a possible debasement.

For my own part, having felt some interest in the Cagots, and carefully studied the different theories about them, I confess myself pleased to leave their origin and existence unexplained. To me, it does not appear more extraordinary that they should have been as they now are from the first, than that they are as we now see them. And I am well inclined to let them rest in their present wild and impressive obscurity, an anomaly in all the existing varieties of mankind, unaccountable and mysterious, combining all that can excite the vague and shadowy imaginings of men, as to beings

“ Who look not like the inhabitants of earth,
And yet are on it.”

The mind, baffled in all the beaten tracks of reasoning, might better embark on the pathless sea of hope, in search of a safe harbor for these wrecks of human nature. We might, by imagining the possibility of their amelioration, lead to plans for their relief; and instead of useless efforts to account for their miseries, make practical attempts to remove them. Could a sympathy be but once excited for these outcasts, the natural benevolence of man would feel the elect-

rical touch through every link of social feeling ; and that the elements for our sympathy exists, is not to be doubted. In their desert retreats these forlorn and attainted individuals still fear that persecution may attack, while they hope that compassion may relieve them. There are to be found amongst this people—the most poor and wretched upon the face of the civilized earth—some of the finest primitive affections : and while contemplating with shame the narrow circle into which man may imprison his fellow man, we have at least the consolation of knowing that he possesses in himself the power of dissolving the shackles he has forged ; and of burying the memory of his own injustice, in an oblivious flood of charity and atonement.

CHAPTER IV.

"You do not intend, Sir, to go any farther up this dreary valley ?" asked my guide (after we had advanced near a league,) in the usual tone and general manner of putting a question, which one wishes to have answered in the negative.

"Yes, I do, though," replied I, "for two reasons, my lad. I feel myself not well—my bed was damp last night, I fear—and I must seek for some house that will afford me lodgings for the night."

"Then, Sir, you must come back to ours, for between this and the frontier line there is not a human being nor a habitation."

"Why, you told me, a little while back, that some Cagots lived in these parts !"

"Oh, Cagots ! yes, but you don't count them for any thing, or their huts either, I suppose ?" said he, inquiringly.

"Lead me to one of them, and you shall see," was my very unsatisfactory answer. The boy, with mingled interest for me and detestation of the Cagots, laboured hard to convince me that it was little less than insanity to trust myself in the contamination of their hovels. And finding my hardihood unshaken, he seemed to shrink from me, as if the repugnance with which he regarded the association I projected had thrown its shadow over his good feelings towards myself.

While we held this short parley together, I felt myself growing extremely unwell, for a violent cold had taken sudden possession of my frame. I hastened on, towards what I looked to as the shelter, and what my guide considered the infection, of some Cagot's hut : and I grew impatient at the mist and the murky clouds, which shrouded the sides of the hills, and prevented us from distinguishing any object at all distant. As we turned round a huge block of granite that lay almost across the path, the boy, who was straining to catch a

view of a secluded gorge, which he knew to contain one solitary hut, turned abruptly to me, seized me by the arm, and pointed in silence to a spot about twenty yards from the side of the path. I there observed, coiled up like a snake, or in the position which he himself would have called *la rocca del golgo*,* the gloomy and repulsive Spaniard—the very last of my acquaintance whom I could have wished to encounter in such a place. I never felt better satisfied at my common habit of carrying a gun in these parts, even when I had no chance of meeting game; and my guide had a perfect accordance of feeling with me on that point, for with a pleased and significant look, he whispered, “Is it loaded?” I gave an affirmative nod; and we went on, our eyes turned with a sort of fascination upon the object which neither of us admired. We had recognized the champion of the Faith by his dress, and the form of his figure, which I had seen displayed in the same position the night before, when he lay on the floor of the inn at Gedro. I know not whether or not he slept on the present occasion any more than then; but his face was towards the earth, for the purpose, as my guide insisted, of holding converse with some of the spirits of evil with which that solitude was reputed to abound. I marvelled much at the circumstance of this lonely ruffian, having thus singly straggled upon the desolate track; but I reconciled his appearance with the notion that such a place must have had a most magnetic power upon a dreary vagabond like him: and recollecting the parting caution of the sergeant, I passed quietly forward, without disturbing the feigned or actual slumber in which the fellow lay. A few hundred yards left him shadowed in mist; yet I could not from time to time resist my inclination to look back in the expectation to see his tall form, magnified in vapour, striding on with giant step and tortuous movement. But he did not again appear; and our attention was taken from him by the faint sound of a cascade, murmuring sadly, like the voice of some mountain spirit, that sent its wailings on the desert. Such was the notion which flitted across my brain in that scene, so fit for magic and all its wild allusions. My mind was suited to the desolate tone of nature. I was ill; fever was in my blood; and my imagination seemed to move in mist. It was in this frame of feeling, and while I mechanically followed my guide, that these straggling notions of enchantment took the consistency of the verses which I afterwards committed to paper.

SONG OF THE MOUNTAIN SPIRITS.

When all is calm in the torrid sky,
Yet the eagle, hovering far on high,
Turns quick and flaps his ruffled wing,
And seems to shrink from some viewless thing—
’Tis then we sport on fields of air,
Unseen within our wide dominion,
Fan the proud bird that hovers there,
And scare him with our noiseless pinion.

*The Grey-hound’s roll.

When waves lie hushed upon the main,
 And thistle-down floats not o'er the plain,
 And flowerets droop by lowland rills,
 Yet tufted verdure moves on the hills—
 'Tis we who rush from mossy cells,
 High o'er the bed of drowsy ocean,
 Fling o'er the hills our fresh'ning spells,
 And shake the grass in magic motion.

Read on yon pine tree's silver bark
 Our scripture legends, wild and dark—
 The mystic charter graven there
 Sways the rude spirits of the air!
 Beneath the Pole star's quivering light,
 Grouped round its stem our crews assemble,
 And mortal wanderers of the night
 Hear our unholy mirth, and tremble.

They tremble! yet a darker hour
 Shows forth the mountain spirits' power—
 From cloud to cloud, we rush along,
 The thunder peal our choral song—
 And from our torches, flung around,
 We hurl the lightnings bolt of death—
 Till, echoing to our shouts, resound
 Wild shrieks from smoking vales beneath.

As we approached the little cascade, whose voice became at every step more loud and hoarse, a gloomy gorge opened upon us to the right, and the foam of the angry water appeared through the mist like a moving column of snow. The rocks over which it fell were soon however visible, and the rugged path that led up their sides in almost perpendicular ascent.

"Now, Sir" said my guide, "you may see the Cagot's hut, perched on that shelving rock, but scarcely to be distinguished from it. You see the smoke blown closely by the wind?"

"I do," said I, "and here we may part—for I am resolved to make that hut my lodging for the night."

"Well, Sir, since you *will* do it, it does not become me to dissuade you further," said the boy, with a mixed look of sorrow and anger in his face. And as I gave him his fee for his advice and attendance, he turned away, thinking me no doubt a most incorrigible and incurable patient. Resolved not to risk an encounter with the dubious occupant of the valley behind us, he took his way up the mountain towards the westward, in which direction lay the gorge I was entering upon; and bounding across the little cataract, as agile as a wild deer, he was soon lost to my sight in the mists above.

I then stood alone in that dismal spot. I knew that I was close on the frontier lines, and at the very foot of Mont Perdu, but I could not distinguish any object two hundred yards distant, and the thin smoke curling from the roof of the Cagot's hut was all that gave signs of animation to the scene. This lowly habitation stood on a patch of earth that covered a projecting ledge of rock which hung over the black ravine. The land surrounding the house was rudely cultivat-

ed, and showed a crop of dwarf vegetables, intermixed with a few shrubs, and here and there a pine tree, the seed of which, wind-wafted to the clefts of rock, had taken root in the spongy soil. Upon advancing closer, I saw a couple of goats browsing on the patches of furze and coarse grass, which coated the face of the rock; but no inhabitant appeared in or about the hut, as far it least as my glance could penetrate its secrets, through two small windows in the front, and as many behind, looking upon the little garden and down the ravine. The door was closed; but there was not altogether that air of filth and desolateness about the place which I had before observed to surround the habitation of the unfortunate class of beings. Ill as I felt myself, and in want of repose and warmth, I did not perhaps see things in their true light, but fancied them better than they were, from my satisfaction at being within their reach at all.

I advanced and gently tapped at the door. A bustle seemed excited within, at this intrusive and no doubt unusual sound. I knocked again, and heard low, quick whisperings, as if of stifled alarm. I once more, and more loudly, repeated my demand for entrance, and at length the door slowly opened—and I started back with surprise, to see upon the threshold, the figure of the poor woman, who had so much excited my attention the same morning at Gedro.

The recognition, to my still greater wonder, was evidently mutual; for, from what I had seen of her at our last meeting, I supposed her to be so utterly imbecile as not to possess the commonest power of observation. But I was in this mistaken; she remembered me well and kindly; and the air of trepidation and terror, which filled her countenance as she opened the door, was in an instant changed to an expression of pleased security—the most repulsive certainty, that I had ever seen of its kind. Assuming the gentlest tone I could command, not to alarm the poor old creature, I said that I was glad she had got home safely with her provisions. She gave me a ghastly smile of thanks, and seemed quite overpowered by my few words addressed to her in a way so unlike that to which she was accustomed. She did not, however, venture to speak, much less to invite me into the house; and I was unwilling to alarm her by abruptly demanding permission to enter. I asked her if she was alone.

"No, not quite," replied she, with hesitating, and almost inarticulate tones.

"Is your husband within?"

"No, he is cutting fuel in the forest."

"Then, who pray, have you in the house?"

"Why, sir, it is only my poor daughter."

This reply was uttered with fear and trembling, and as the old woman spoke she threw her looks alternately back into the house and at me, as if the safety of her precious charge had been in the most imminent danger. I was too ill to laugh outright, but I could not help smiling at this maternal alarm: the very notion of this daughter was so disgusting to me, that I for a moment felt utterly repugnant to enter the house; and I acknowledged a passing excuse for the aversion, so common to the people of the country, against these unfortunate beings. I soon, however, recovered from this impres-

sion ; but feeling myself getting worse every moment, was resolved to take the place by storm, if I could not obtain an amicable admission. I therefore said, in a manner as gentle, but somewhat more firm, than before,

"Well, well, you have nothing to fear from me, for yourself or your daughter, depend upon it,—you are a helpless woman—and you carry your protection with you." She took these words in their common meaning, and evidently felt no offence ; but she did not ask me in. I was therefore forced to put the question plainly.

"Now, my poor woman, will you have the kindness to let me enter your house, for I am fatigued and ill?"

I thought I could clearly trace all the fermentation, arising between her wishes and her fears. She dared not refuse me—she was inclined to admit me—but was terrified lest some sinister design might have lurked in the extraordinary circumstance of a stranger visiting this lonely refuge of proscription. I read all this in what is called the index of her mind—but there was a secret page in the volume, which all my study did not enable me at that time to understand.

"Come, come," said I, as soothingly as I could, "fear nothing, for you have nothing to fear. I am not disposed to do you any harm ; on the contrary as you must have seen this morning, I am inclined to do you service."

The fact was that I had added a trifle to the monk's charitable donation, which it was not worth while to mention before, but which had its weight in the scales wherein the poor Cagot now balanced her thoughts.

"Wait an instant where you are," said she, shutting the door, which I heard her bolt inside. I leaned against the wall, and in a few moments the door opened again, and she fairly asked me in.

"You may now enter, sir," said she, "and welcome, but have mercy upon two poor lone women, pray do!"

Good Heavens ! thought I, what does the old creature dread ? She has surely no money to be robbed of ? and what other temptation is there here ? I passed the threshold thus thinking, but only said, "be satisfied my good woman, you really have nothing to apprehend."

The daughter for whom the old woman felt all this alarm, or at all events the chief part of it, sat in a corner spinning. She was as far as possible from the fire-place, which contained a very comfortable blaze ; and as I looked at her I saw every limb trembling, while the flax vibrated in her fingers, like the thread of expiring life about to be severed by the fatal scissors of the Fates. This nervous object, whom I so unintentionally alarmed, was, like all the younger women of the Cagot race, close wrapped in her dark grey capulet, which covered the head, and being closely drawn about the throat (most likely, I thought, from the negative effect of vanity, which hides a defect as readily as it exposes a charm,) the *goutre* was not perceptible, and this lessened in some degree the rising nausea, which I found it so hard to suppress. I saw the torture which my presence caused, and I did not wish to add to it by inquisitive observation. I contented

myself, therefore, with a hasty glance at the pale face peeping out from her hood. Her eyes were cast down, and the lids almost closed. Her other features appeared rather well formed, to my hurried glance; and I was afraid to let it linger a moment longer, lest some movement might display the loathsome swelling, the very thought of which was sickening.

I sat down on a low chair beside the fire, and Ranger, without ceremony, took possession of one corner of the chimney. The other was occupied by a large grey cat, whose green eyes glared, and who raised up her back, hissing fiercely her dissent to the intrusion. She formed a fitting member of the domestic trio, and I should not have been surprised had I discovered a *goitre* under the fur of her neck, for she had a genuine Cagot eye and air. Neither of the women spoke a word. The one sat trembling, and the other stood motionless. I felt anything but comfortable, independent of the increasing sensation of illness. There is always an awkwardness in being in a place where one knows one's self not welcome; but it is increased tenfold when you are convinced that fear is the motive which keeps back the expression of discontent. That was exactly my case just then, and I felt a thousand times more embarrassment in the hovel of these poor outcasts, than I should experience in the presence of those haughty pretenders, of rank and wealth, who glory in creating sensations of perplexity, but whose arrogance only rouses the scorn of an independent mind.

To my several efforts to commence a conversation, I could get but monesyllables from the mother, while the daughter was sullenly silent; and I should never, I believe, have succeeded in exciting the positive attention of either, had they not perceived me to be evidently and seriously ill. I was attacked with the shivering which is the general precursor of feverish colds, and the girl did not tremble more violently from her terror on my entrance than I did in a quarter of an hour afterwards. As the women gazed on me, I saw them put their heads close together, and heard them whisper in cautious tones. They consulted on my case, and as they seemed satisfied of my harmlessness, their compassion was excited in my favor. At length the old woman approached me, and in a tone as distinct as she could assume, she told me I was welcome to remain in her house as long as I found it convenient, and that she only lamented the pooriness of the accommodation. I was astonished at this unhesitating expression of confidence and kindness, and more than ever confirmed in my hatred of the prejudice, which pronounced the unhappy Cagots to be devoid of the common feelings of humanity. Put thus at my ease, by finding that my companions were in some measure recovering theirs, the discomforts of illness were no longer increased by the consciousness of intrusion. I admitted the sympathy of the old woman, and thanked her for it, in a manner, I must believe, as sincere as the feeling it expressed; for the girl, raising her head for an instant, whispered, in the rude *patois* of the mountains, "We have nothing to fear from him."

"Indeed you have not, my poor girl," replied I, in the same dialect, in which I had become tolerably conversant, and in which the old woman had always spoke, although she sufficiently understood

the French in which I had replied. But this incautious betrayal of my learning had an unlucky effect on her to whom it was addressed. The girl seemed quite frightened to find that I could speak, as well as understand the *patois*. She gave one hurried glance of surprise from a pair of large black eyes, which instantly sank again, and I could not induce her to speak another word.

The old woman began now to make active efforts to relieve me. She added fuel to the fire, and she proceeded to prepare for me some whey of goat's milk and vinegar, letting me know that I might, if I chose it, retire to an inner room, and occupy a bed for the night. This communication was evidently the result of a suggestion from the younger of my hostesses, with whom the old one kept a constant telegraphic communication of nods, and winks, and signs. I was taken by surprise by this offer of a lodging, for I had scarcely contemplated its being probable, or even possible. When the offer was actually made to me, I could not help shrinking from its acceptance; had I not been so much indisposed, I should certainly have preferred trusting to a mountain walk, in search of other quarters, to coming into contact with any thing belonging to my revolting companions. I had nevertheless muttered an imperfect acknowledgement of assent and thanks; and while my kind nurse prepared the whey, and a *ptisan*, made with dried lime-tree blossoms and other ingredients, I had time to examine more particularly the place I was in.

CHAPTER V.

The room in which I sat, served, like the entrance-room of most cottages, for "parlor, kitchen and hall." It wore any air rather than that of the misery usually connected with ideas of a Cagot's hut. It was decently furnished with tables and chairs, a dresser with crockery-ware, a sufficiency of cooking utensils, and even a few glasses and other conveniencies beyond the wants of beggary, or even of a state of moderate indigence. The floor was clean swept, and every thing in an orderly state. In a small room, or closet, beside the fireplace at the side next the entrance, I observed a coarse but decent bed, which I concluded to belong to the old couple; and beyond the chimney was a similar recess, furnished as its fellow, and this I understood was to be appropriated to my use.

Where then, thought I, is yonder sallow-faced and interesting damsel to pass the night? But being rather nervous on the subject of any detail in the family arrangements, and fearful of touching a delicate chord, I ventured no inquiry whatever. In the meantime, the damsel in question, but not in demand, was busily occupied, and as actively so as was consistent with a limping gait as she walked, in

making preparations for my bed-room ; and she really seemed to employ herself about my comforts with so much alacrity, that I felt some qualms for the ingratitude that made me still look on her and think of her with an unaccountable feeling of loathing. I could bear the presence of the old one better, for there was not any of those involuntary wanderings, of thought with respect to her which one cannot suppress sometimes in relation to less antiquated females. Imagination could find no resting-place in her wrinkles, nor tread the mazes of her scanty grey hairs. It was hard to judge of the girl's age from her figure, the deformity of her lamentas, and from my scanty views of her colorless cheek. She might have been about twenty, but had she been a hundred, she had not been more secure from my enquiries or intrusion. Chance, however, led me into the secret of her dormitory ; for I observed her on one occasion to open a little door at the farther corner of the room from the chimney-side where I sat, and she entered a recess that I thought must have either composed or led to the place of her rest ; but my inquisitiveness was quite content to remain outside the sanctuary. The dress of both these women was far removed from the appearance of actual want, as were the household appointments. The girl wore, beside her grey cloth capulet, which was almost, if not quite new, an under dress of nearly the same kind of stuff, with very good shoes, and blue worsted stockings, displaying feet and ankles by no means coarse or large. The old Cagot was very decently dressed. Instead of the tattered wretchedness of her morning costume, she was now covered with clean and comfortable clothing ; and it was clear to me that her half naked appearance at the inn was assumed for the purpose of concealment or imposition.

There was altogether in the air of every thing I saw, enough to excite the curiosity of one fond of seeking adventures, and not unaccustomed to meet them. I made up my mind to the fact that some unusual cause existed for this appearance of comparative comfort and holiday attire. The seclusion of the scene, and the circumstances of the times, favored the notion that this hut might be the place of rendezvous for some political intrigue, and for persons requiring better accommodations than a family of miserable Cagots : and the chance of observation and treachery might account for the alarm caused by my visit, better than any dread of mere harm to property or person, where so little temptation existed for either. It was thus I debated with myself, and I was strengthened in my belief of some mystery by the anxiety evinced by both women that I should betake myself to bed, which the old one, however, naturally enough accounted for, by recommending repose as the most likely relief to the illness I suffered under.

Anxious, nevertheless, to see whether any new light would be thrown upon the state of things by the appearance of the old wood-cutter, I was resolved to wait for his return before committing myself to bed ; and to beguile the time and satisfy my curiosity, I commenced the following conversation, which went on by snatches.

"Why, my good woman, you don't seem to want comfort here ?"

"Poor creatures like us want little of any thing, Sir."

"You must have some kind friend who gives you the means to support yourselves so decently?"

"Indeed, we sometimes get a little help?"

"But chance very seldom leads a charitable traveller into this desert?"

"Ah, Sir, charity might find a home even here!"

"Then tell me, my good dame, is it for charity that you keep this spare bed ready, so clean and snug?"

This question was clearly a puzzler, and caused serious embarrassment to both my hearers. The girl with seeming indifference to what was said, kept very busily occupied in getting matters ready for my accommodation, but I could observe her, now and then, to stop; and with her face averted, as if she looked for other things, she evidently listened attentively, to what passed between myself and the old woman, whose answers were always preceded by a long pause and an interchange of looks, and sometimes even of whisperings with the girl. To my last stated question I could get no reply, I was therefore resolved to put it still more plainly.

"Come, come, tell me the truth," said I, "don't you expect some one here to-day, whose bed I am about to occupy?"

The old Cagot, with more address than I could have expected from her, avoided the very appearance of having heard my question. She poked the tongs into the fagots, which were blazing round a machine, in shape between a pot and a kettle, which contained water for bathing my feet; and she examined the vessels intended for my whey, with that apparent earnestness, which we often see in the eyes of those, whose minds are as empty as the vacancy they gaze at. But this silent hesitation was an eloquent answer to my demand; and it confirmed me in my belief, as much as the most ample confession. Being thus satisfied, as to what I had before but suspected, I did not further endeavor to wring an unwilling revelation from my hostess; but I was gladly preparing to treat my aching head and feverish body to the bed, which I suspected to be at the bottom of this secret, be it what it might, when the noise of a bundle of wood, falling outside the house, called off the attention of the women, and somewhat aroused my own. "My husband," exclaimed the old woman; "my father," murmured the young one; and they both moved to the door, to admit the lord and master of the place.

The hurry of the women was positive evidence of their anxiety to guard against an incautious betrayal on the part of the person expected; and rapid whisperings, as they stood outside, confirmed it. Having, as I supposed, announced the presence of a stranger in the house, they both returned with the old man, who had profited by their caution, and showed no surprise at seeing me. He had deposited his bundle of sticks outside, and he carelessly sat down upon a stool, bowing to me, and uttering a short sentence of welcome to his hut. Like most of the males of his unsightly race, he was diminutive, weakly, and dull, but not altogether so repulsive in appearance as those of the other sex. I was too seriously ill to attempt the labor of extracting any information from him, and indeed my anxiety to know more about the place I was in, was yielding to the languor which insensibly oppressed me. Returning, there-

fore the man's salutation, by one as brief as his own, I arose from my seat, to go towards my bed room, when I was arrested by the appearance of a strange figure, which I alone perceived through the window that looked upon the garden in rear of the house.

The first thing which attracted my notice was the head of a man, peering above the rocks, which bounded the garden towards the ravine, and the scrambling position of his hands and arms, showed that he was with difficulty climbing up. But in a moment or two, the whole person appeared vaulting with a light bound across the rugged breast work, and safely landed in the garden. The figure thus hurriedly presented to me, was extremely curious, but I had no time to examine it minutely. Stooping to lift up a long staff, which had been probably flung forward as he gained the summit of the rock, the man without further hesitation, ran actively across the little space, and reached in a moment the window through which I perceived him. Putting his face close to it, he gave a loud and familiar shout, which seemed mixed with a chuckle, as if he meant to join the sound of good news to the notice of his arrival. Whether the effect produced was alarm, astonishment, or pleasure, I could not then determine; but his shout was answered by a shriek from both the women—the old one transfixed to her position close to me, with the vessel for my foot-bath in her hands—the young one rushing from the little room, which she was finally preparing for my reception, and instantaneously throwing open the window, making signs of caution to the new comer, and rapidly addressing him in a low tone, but clearly admitting him to be an old acquaintance.

In accordance to what she seemed to say, he only whispered a word or two, and he came immediately round to the entrance, where she met him.

"It is a poor pilgrim," muttered she, as she limped briskly across the floor, addressing me in her suppressed and timid tone, but with her face averted, as if afraid of betraying somewhat more than she ventured to say; and as the stranger paused upon the threshold, rapidly uttering a blessing, which was clearly ready made for such occasions, I had time to look at him attentively. His presence performed a temporary miracle upon me, for either I forgot, or my nerves actually shook off for a few minutes, the illness which had before and did afterwards oppress me.

The man before me was of the middle size, but he stooped as he stood, and thus took at once from the height and activity of air which he possessed just previously in the garden. He now leaned on his staff, and wore the look of middle age, the reality of which appearance was belied by anticipation, as he sprang upwards from the rock. His whole costume was such as we have seen worn by the representations of pilgrims, in pictures, or in Carnival times, but such as had never before met my observation in the motley masquerade of real life. His head was covered with a broad brimmed hat, round which was a string of cockle, mussel, and other shells, indicating the pilgrim's visit to the sea-shore, where probably the term of his penance had ended. His sharp, shrewd features seemed out of character in the disguised air of solemn piety which he endeavored to throw into his countenance; and I thought an arch smile seemed playing on his

compressed lips, and in his twinkling grey eyes, but not easily to be detected through the hair coming down over his forehead, and the bushy beard which covered the lower half of his face. He wore a dark blue frock coat with a large cape coming close up to his throat, which was bare; and round his waist was a leathern belt, fastened with a broad brass buckle, and thickly studded, as was his frock-like body dress, with shells of the same description as those which decorated his hat; a pair of loose dark pantaloons came down to his ankles, and coarse shoes and cloth gaiters completed his dress. Across one shoulder hung a wallet, suspended by a leathern strap, and at his girdle was a wicker covered bottle, an ebony crucifix, and a little basket. His whole attire bore marks of rough travelling, as if he had come by tracks more moist and muddy than even the narrow path trod by the mountaineers and their mules.

While he muttered his entrance prayer, making occasional signs of the cross, and other motions with either hand, I could distinctly remark the acute glance with which he surveyed me rather than the house, in which I was quite prepared to see him perfectly at home. His incantation ended, and his speech, as I thought prepared, he opened his lips and began in French—

“I have given my blessing to this habitation, and all those it contains, inhabitants, and *strangers* as well—for there is one at least with me these walls.”

An air of mock divination, and heavy emphasis accompanied these words, which were plainly directed to me, and meant to make a powerful impression. Had I been in my usual good state of health, I should have richly enjoyed the tricks of this imposter, let the affair have ended as it might; but just then I was too ill to relish his antics, for the charm of his first appearance was beginning to subside. I, however, put on an air of profound reverence, and gave the expected stare of astonishment at the amusing knowledge displayed by the pilgrim. The old man and woman were too stupid to comprehend these niceties of deception, or to play a very complicated part. They therefore remained passive spectators, and the girl only quietly handed a seat to the venerable personage, to whom she did not presume to make any reply.

“Worthy people,” continued he, “will you kindly give a meal and a night’s lodging to a weary pilgrim, returning from the performance of this painful penance, which led him from Lille, on the frontiers of Flanders, called for its beauty, the Paris of the North, to the chapel of our Lady of the Ascension, on the shores of the Mediterranean, close to the City of Barcelona in Spain, where he said fifty aves and served fifteen masses for the repose of the soul of Joseph Jacques Demarle, killed by him—that’s *me*, the said pilgrim—in a fit of passion, one night at a tavern debauch.”

Nobody answered this harangue; but the pilgrim took silence for consent, and freely drawing a chair by the fire-side, he began to disembarass himself of his accoutrements, and spoke as he went on—

“Heaven will reward you for this, kind Christians; and for not despising the lowly confessions of a sinner, who must tell in humility the crime he suffers for, to all whose bounty he solicits—that’s part

of my vow," said he, in a brisker tone, and nodding at me, as if he could not continue any longer the serious mockery he assumed.

"Your crime does not seem to lie heavy on your conscience, reverend pilgrim," said I.

"Why the deuce should it?" said he, "when I have handed it over to the good monks of Saint Marival, and prayed the soul of my poor victim fairly out of purgatory full a fortnight back? Come, mistress, what can you afford a poor pilgrim in the eating line? It is fast-day, but I have a dispensation. And mark me, Mademoiselle, could you give me a cup of water from the well in the garden there? I shall add a few medicinal drops from my flacon, prescribed by the holy physician of the convent, the very morning it was sacked, and the brethren driven out, by the sacrilegious band of that arch reprobate, Mina."

"You have left troublesome folk and a busy scene behind you, it seems," said I.

"Yes, and not far off either," replied he.

"The frontier line is not the sixth part of a league from this house, and the hostile parties are almost within gun shot of each other, close to us."

"You have entered France, my good pilgrim, by a dreary and unfrequented path," continued I; but there was something inquisitorial in these observations, and he perceived it, for he added, pointedly enough—

"Yes—I came by the almost impracticable pass of Bielsa, on my way to fulfil a vow at the chapel of the Virgin, in the valley of Heas, hard by; but there is no place so desolate or sacred, that heresy and Englishmen won't creep in."

This very broad hint was spoken with a sharp and significant nod, which made it pointedly personal; but it was my turn to play the actor, and not wishing to draw down any further retort that might betray me to the Cagots, I prosecuted my examination of the pilgrim no further. In order, however, not to display any symptoms of consciousness, I asked if the Constitutional force was pursuing the fugitives of the Faith?

"Aye, that it is!" cried he, in a most animated tone, and his eye sparkling with pleasure, but he recovered himself in a moment, and added,—“Yes, the enemies of our holy religion are for the time successful. The brave and pious champions of the Faith are forced to retire. Even Misas and Miralhes, Eroles and Mata-Florida, the bravest and best of the Royalist chiefs, are beaten back; and Minna, with his lieutenant, Count de Linati, and the gallant Melchior de Trevazos, called *El Vengador*, the avenger, are treading on the very limits of France this moment."

This last sentence was uttered with a renewed forgetfulness, and a genuine animation of tone, which had power over his hearers as well as himself; for even the Cagot-girl jumped from the stool on which she sat, and clasped her hands either in surprise or sympathy with the pilgrim's evident delight.

I was myself right glad to hear of the triumphs of the Constitutioners; but finding that the pilgrim was playing a double part, I did

not chime in with either his pleasure or his lamentation, but heard the expression of both with apparent indifference. It was, moreover, very clear that he was no stranger in the Cagot's hut. I did not exactly know by what opinions I might be surrounded, or among what sort of folk I might, ere long, be entangled. This pretended pilgrim was a very questionable sort of character, and was very likely to be followed by others, not a whit more correct. I therefore resolved to be extremely reserved and circumspect in my remarks and conduct, and I thought my safest quarters would be found in bed. The old woman once more urged me to retire, and I saw that my presence was an incumbrance to the whole party. I accordingly prepared to go, and I was resolved to make my exit with a civil speech to my fellow lodger.

"I am afraid, my good friend," said I, "that I have forestalled the accommodations which would have been yours, but for my intrusion. But being unwell, I must keep the bed which chance has given me, and I hope you will be able to find a corner to repose yourself in for the night. With this hope I wish you light slumbers, and good cheer."

"Good night, Sir, good night," said he. "First come, first served, is a common proverb, and you are heartily welcome to be its illustration. As for me, hard beds and hard fare have been my lot for some time, particularly since my friends, the monks, have been dispossessed; but I hope I have a chance of finding wherewith to enable me to eat and sleep here, although the place does not promise much at first sight. God bless you, Sir, and here," (opening his little basket,) "to help your recovery, take this charm. Do not despise it—'twas blessed by a holy man—tie it round your neck, and 'twill not make you sleep the worse; for, used with faith, it will keep off the nightmare, the cramp, and bad dreams."

He here gave me this amulet, consisting of a little bag of white leather, marked with a scarlet silk cross, and tied with a black ribbon. I took it as gravely as it was offered; and turning towards my sleeping-place, I cast an involuntary glance into the opposite recess, which I had before conjectured to be the bedroom of the girl. I saw enough to convince me that it was a chamber of larger dimensions than my own, and appointed in a style superior to the rest of the house. Part of a curtained bed was evident; and, rather to my satisfaction than surprise, I observed a Spanish guitar hanging against the wall, with a cloth cloak, while some books were scattered on a small table. All these appearances confirmed my conjectures as to the sometime visitors of the hut; and I stopped short to make further observations, when the girl, who with the old woman was in attendance on me, stepped before me, and shut the door of the room. I took the hint thus given; and a short time sufficed to have my feet bathed by the kind old woman, and to settle me in a bed, wonderfully well appointed for the place it was found in.

"Now, Sir, sleep soundly, and have no fear; my daughter or myself will watch, lest you should want any thing," said the old woman, quitting my closet, and leaving the door ajar.

CHAPTER VI.

Whatever might have contained the charm—whether the pilgrim's leathern bag, which I carefully hung round my neck, or the old woman's medicament—I slept soon, and soundly for several hours. When I awoke, far in the night, as I found out by feeling the hands of my watch, I was in a high degree feverish, and in considerable pain of head and body. I had a confused and half delirious notion of all sorts of disagreeable things connected with my visit to the hut—loathsome Cagots, the ruffian Spaniard, the suspicious pilgrim, all mixed together in combinations of annoyance. I forgot where I was, and started up in my bed. But a moment or two brought the truth of my situation clearly to my mind; and a light, glimmering through my imperfectly closed door, and busy whisperings in the next room, told me that the family, with their friend and visiter, had not all retired to repose. My throbbing head was not in a state to attend to what was passing, even could I have overcome my aversion and contempt for *that* method of gaining information. But I could not avoid catching an occasional word of the conversation; and I heard the names of Mina, Linati, and Don Melchior frequently repeated, without any coherent sequence which could lead to a betrayal on the part of the speakers, or a discovery on mine, of whatever secret might be joined with these names. The conversation was carried on with great animation, and certainly in French, so I was convinced that the Cagots had no part in it. I thought I could distinguish the pilgrim's quick and sententious manner of speech, but no tone above his breath allowed me positively to recognize his voice. The other was, as it were, muffled in still lower whisperings, so that it was impossible to ascertain whether it came from male or female.

I certainly felt some feverish reflections pass rapidly through my brain as to the strange scenes amidst which I was placed; and having sense to know that I was, in my present situation, utterly at the mercy of persons and events, as they might arrive, I made up my mind to let things take their course, without worrying myself with hopeless conjectures. But although thus in every way disinclined to listen to the conversation, I could not restrain my curiosity to get a sight if possible of the speakers. I therefore cautiously raised myself in my bed, and stooping forwards, not being embarrassed by curtains, I was enabled to see into the outer room without running any risk of being in my turn observed.

The first thing which caught my eye was a man sitting in front of the fire-place, whose comparatively youthful appearance and close shaven face, formed a strong contrast to the thick-bearded adventurer I had left in the same position when I went to bed. Beside him stood a table with remnants of an analyzed repast; and beyond it, with her back to me, sat a female figure, of which I could distinguish nothing but its generally graceful contour, and a head covered with flowing

ringlets, which appeared dark as jet, as they hung upon the shoulders that, like them, were buried in deep shade. She leaned one elbow on the table, and as her head rested on her hand, I fancied a pensiveness in the attitude, which seemed to speak a whole story of anxiety and interest.

The man was talking rapidly, in all the constraint of an under tone, but with evident respect, and using gestures expressive at once of his earnestness and all the active nature of the scene he was describing. A word or two incautiously pronounced in a louder key, as if his voice gave the slip to his prudence, caused the female to raise her finger with a warning motion, and the knowing smile he gave in reply, made me almost start, from its resemblance to that which I had remarked so particularly in the pilgrim. In fact, another glance of scrutiny convinced me it was that pious masquerader himself; and I rapidly observed that he wore precisely the same clothes, only that they were divested of all their shell-work ornament, and other accessories, as completely as his face was of the distinctive decoration of penance and pilgrimage.

At this instant, as fate would have it, one of the most indiscreet symptoms of cold in the head escaped me—a loud and sudden sneeze, which alarmed me almost as much as those I had so minutely observed. The pilgrim jumped up. So did his companion, and with a light and graceful step she darted across the floor to the distant end of the room. I laid myself down, quickly but quietly, at full length, and gently drew the bed clothes up close to my chin. Three or four consecutive repetitions of my treacherous sneeze made it impossible to feign sleep, so I uttered an accompanying moan or two, to give the appearance of my being self-disturbed. At these sounds, and holding a little copper lamp in her hand, the dimly lighted, half-hidden figure of the Cagot girl came limping into my room; a dark cotton handkerchief which was tied over the close hood of her capulet, gave evidence of her having slept or been prepared for sleep during her time of watching. I shrunk involuntarily from her presence into the retirement of the bed-clothes. There was something nauseous to me in the notion of her sallow cheek, her lameness, and the hidden *goitre*, which was exaggerated by imagination, mixed with the cunning concealment which she aided in practising as to the persons outside. I therefore told her, in a very gruff tone, and in a few words of Patois, that I wanted nothing, and that she might retire. She took me at my word, and the withdrawing of the light gave silent notice of her absence. I therefore looked boldly up again, hoping to catch a second glimpse of the mysterious female who had so much excited my curiosity and interest. But I saw nothing, the door having been drawn as close as its imperfect construction would admit of, by my repulsive nurse, and I only heard now and then a faint whistling from the half-opened lips, like the echo of the lowest possible whisper.

The effects of this temporary excitement soon passed over, and I became more violently oppressed with pain and thirst than I was before. I however took copious draughts of the liquid preparation which stood beside me, and after some time, I again sunk into an im-

perfect slumber. From this I was awake, or rather aroused, for I could scarcely say I slept, by the sound of footsteps in the garden close to my window. An occasional pause seemed to mark that the person, be it who it might, stopped at intervals to listen at the windows, or perhaps attempt to peep through the crevices of the temporary shutters; and I suffered somewhat of that vague annoyance, almost always excited by uncertain and imperfect sounds. Something more positive came however very quickly to give me more serious cause of inquietude, for the lamp having been suddenly extinguished in the outer room, my door gently creaked upon its rustic hinges, and I heard some one groping his way cautiously about the walls, until his hand came in contact with my gun, which I had as usual deposited in the corner nearest to my bed. I heard the barrel grating against the wall, as the secret hand withdrew it from its position. I confess that I felt at the moment extremely uncomfortable, so much so as to prompt an immediate measure, which might, in the apprehension of treachery, have been considered a desperate one. I sprang suddenly up, stretched out my hand at random, but in the direction of the one I intended to arrest, and caught a firm grasp of a sinewy arm, covered with a cloth sleeve.

"Stop, whoever you are, and let go your hold of that gun!" said I, in a suppressed but steady voice.

No violence was offered to me; but a second hand was placed on mine with a pressure of entreaty, and a voice, which I instantly knew to be the pilgrim's, begged of me not to be alarmed, protested that nothing wrong was meant to me, but that suspicious sounds outside forced him the speaker, to borrow my gun, as the only weapon of defence which the house afforded. I was somewhat re-assured, but not quite satisfied at this rapid explanation: but I had no suspicion of the pilgrim, who had, from the first, won a species of confidence, by the frankness and gaiety of his air, which bore more of frolic than insincerity in it. I therefore loosed my hold, saying,

"Well, my friend, I prove my confidence in you, and I trust to your good faith."

"You may do so, implicitly," said he, seizing my hand, and registering this assurance by a cordial pressure. He quietly stepped back to the other room, and I sat up in my bed to listen to the result of his proceedings.

After a few minutes of doubtful silence, I heard the footsteps again, retiring from the close neighborhood of my window; and in a little more, a knocking at the house door gave the signal of the intended entrance of friend or foe, as the case might be.

"Who are you that knocks, and what do you want?" fiercely inquired the unbearded and unshelled pilgrim, double-cocking my gun, and looking I dare say as resolute as ever did Peter the Hermit or any of his followers.

"The blessing of Saint Geronimo be on the house!" replied a rough voice, in Spanish, "open for a soldier of the Faith, in the name of God and of the King!"

"That's not our watchword!" said the pilgrim, "what is to be done?" addressing himself to some one beside him, who answered in

a whisper. This I thought could be only the strange female, and my curiosity made me stretch myself to the foot of my bed, and close to the door, through the opening of which, I cautiously peeped; but to my great disappointment, I saw only the girl of the house, in her most ungraceful night dress, who tremblingly held by the pilgrim's arm.

"Open, good Christians," continued the voice outside "you have nothing to fear. It is but a benighted soldier alone and unarmed."

"If I was sure of that exclaimed the pilgrim, with a suppressed stamp of his foot, and jerk of one arm, and then scratching his head, in evident perplexity.

"Open the door for the love of ——"

"Have patience, then! by the life of my 'saint!'" growled and swore the pilgrim, with no example of patience or of sanctity, and in just such an attempt at Spanish as might be expected from a pious wanderer, who walked across the hills of Barcelona and back again.

"Can there be a plot?" inquired the pilgrim of himself, but he got no satisfactory answer. "Yes, yes, I must let him in, and confide in the Englishman—there's nothing else for it," continued he; and addressing himself to the girl, he added, "do you conceal yourself—nothing in the shape of a woman must appear before these rambling vagabonds of the Faith. Pray go in, and keep very quiet.

According to this advice, the girl crept across the floor, and entered the door of the secret apartment. The pilgrim took up the little lamp, which he had relighted, and came close to my bed. The reader will recollect that I had before clearly seen and recognized him, when stripped of his disguise; but he, not knowing that, thought it necessary to caution me against any abrupt suspicion. He therefore hastily said, as he entered,

Now, my good sir, pray let me entreat you, do not be alarmed at my change of appearance—you are ill and feverish, and may not recognize me—but I am, that is, I was, the very identical pilgrim you saw and talked with to-night. But you see I have got rid of my beard and my dress, and my vow, for in fact my pilgrimage is over and I am on my way home. But this is no time for explanation—there is danger near us—and I cannot believe that you are in any plot against any one in this house—are you? Now, do tell me honestly and frankly."

"No, on my life and honor," replied I, "but I am ready to assist in its defence."

"You are?" cried he, cutting short my heroics. "Give me your hand, then," and seizing one, he started, looked with a most pathetic air full in my face, and exclaimed—"Good God, sir, you are in a high fever—how flushed you are! your eye is in a blaze—Oh! if I had but father Munoz, the convent physician here!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack! said the heavy fist of the person at the cotage door.

"Saints, devils, and martyrs!" roared the pilgrim, "keep quiet I say." Then turning to me, "For the love of heaven, sir, don't stir."

"Open the door, good Christian," whack, whack ! went the tongue and fist outside ; while the pilgrim went on, turning alternately from me, and to me.

"Go to the devil—Pray keep cool—(whack, whack, whack !)—May you never eat nor drink—swallow large draughts of ptisan—" ("Open, open the door.") May you perish from cold !—Cover yourself well with the blankets—(whack !) May the frost pinch you !—Encourage perspiration—And the wind whistle through you !—and keep yourself warm—(whack, whack !) Keep quiet !—lie still—I'm coming—I'm going—I'll open the door—I'll shut the door—(whack, whack, whack !) May curses seize you !—May God bless you Sir !"—and pushing me back into the bed, from which I attempted to rise, he rushed into the outer room, slammed my door after him, and opened the other, cursing the intruder with all his might and main.

"Health and wealth !"* exclaimed the Spaniard, in the proverbial greeting common in his country, and with a cringing expression.

"Furies and the devil !" retorted the pilgrim, "Who and what are you, that disturb poor people thus."

"Is it possible ?" said the Spaniard, in an astonished tone.

"What ! Sanchez ! Is this you ?" cried the pilgrim.

"What has become of your beard ?"

"Where is your cassock ?"

"And you have not been shot ?"

"And you have really escaped hanging ?"

"I have indeed," said the Spaniard. "That fool, Don Melchior, pardoned me, and let me escape—"

"But you may meet me again !" said the pilgrim.

"Perhaps we may !" muttered the Spaniard.

Every sound of the voice tended to convince me that this was no other than the ruffian I had seen the preceding day. At this last expression, the very same as his parting words to the Sergeant at Gedro, I could not restrain my desire to be sure of him. I therefore leaned forward, at the risk of discovery, and caught the glare of his dark eye, and saw his hand laid expressly upon his knife.

As soon as the Spaniard had recognized the pilgrim, he spoke French to him with great fluency ; and a conversation now began between them relating to some former acquaintanceship and adventures, the particulars of which I could not make out. I was so disturbed and harassed by interruptions and curiosity, mixed with occasional anxiety, that I really was, as the pilgrim said, in a high fever. My head swam and burned, my mouth was parched, and I lay almost insensible to what passed in the next room.

But the pilgrim, after some time, paid me a visit, and told me that the Spaniard was asleep before the fire, and that there was nothing to apprehend. I did not think this apparent slumbering any proof of security, if there were any danger in the fellow's being awake ; and I told the credulous pilgrim to be on his guard, if he had any secrets to conceal.

* *Salud y pesetas*, is one of the *rinframes*, with which the conversation of Spaniards abounds. *Pesetas* stands for riches in the proverbial application.

"Let me alone," said he. "I know the scoundrel I have to deal with. He *does* sleep now, depend upon it, for I took good care to mix one of my *charms* in his brandy—just the same, my good Sir—pray don't be angry—as the old woman put into *your* whey, and to which you owe the sleep you have already had."

I saw that this fellow had not lived in a convent of Capuchins for nothing, but that his friend, Father Munoz, had taught him some of his tricks; but I nevertheless could not help liking him, and having faith in him. Such is for me the irresistible charm of a frank and cordial manner. I found myself, however inclined, totally unable to profit by the communicative disposition of my companion, or to gain any information on the secrets of this hut, the incidents of which were becoming every hour more mysterious and dramatic. I listened to the *ci-devant* pilgrim: but could scarcely reply, and I regretted to find that, however open he might be as to a part of his own affairs, he was double locked, and barred, and bolted, in respect to others."

"Now, my dear good Sir," said he, in the kindest possible tone, "I am forced by pressing matters to quit this house. I must take away this sleeping ruffian with me. He is of the army of the Faith, and he has reason to believe my opinions the same as his own; but I should blush before any Englishman not to avow myself the very reverse. I must however keep up the farce with him, and get him from this place. He wandered here by chance from a gloomy love of solitude. He is a prime villain, and has just escaped from death by means of the very man he attempted to assassinate, but who was warned of his purpose by a friend. His intended victim was no other than the Avenger, Don Melchor de Trevazos, the bravest, the noblest of men. But I must leave you—yet it grieves me. Still, you may rely on it, you are in safe hands. The old people of this hut will take good care of you; the young woman will be kind to you; and I have learned from the fellow without, that Father Munoz, a most skilful though a young physician, and a conscientious though fierce enthusiast, is at a village close by, where he intends to rally some stragglers of the faith, to repass the frontier and oppose Don Melchior, who has driven them before him like sheep. I will send for this monk to seek you; and, in the mean time, should any other strangers arrive, pray have no suspicions—take no notice of what passes—and expect to see me shortly again. God bless you once more—there is your gun—keep quiet—and all will be well with you."

I returned the cordial squeeze of his hand, nodded assent to his suggestions, and wished him a safe journey. He immediately left me; and in about half an hour afterwards, the dawn just then breaking, I heard him rouse the Spaniard from his sleep, and they quitted the house together.

CHAPTER VII.

No sooner were they gone, than the old woman, who with her husband had kept close while the Spaniard remained in the house, came cautiously into my room, and finding me awake, she commenced a series of inquiries into my illness, and prescriptions for its removal. She told me that the worthy and pious man, who had completed his pilgrimage and resumed his own proper character, had given her a letter to take to Gedro to deliver to a Spanish monk, the same, as she believed, who relieved her so humanely the previous morning, and who, being skilled in medicine, would come to see, and, she hoped, to cure me. She added, that she was just setting out; and, in the mean time, having replenished my jug of diet-drink, and her husband being about to start on his daily task of wood-cutting, she left me and the house to the care of her daughter.

I almost shuddered at this announcement; but ill as I was, I had a gleam of hope that I might possibly, through the girl, get some insight into the proceedings of the concealed heroine, (for I was resolved that she *should* be one) who, I was certain, still remained hidden in the house. This notion made me avoid the expression of my disgust, at the prospect of being left at the mercy of the young and goitred guardian thus promised me; and I abstained from any hint or allusion, which might lead the old woman to suspect my knowledge of her household matters being deeper than she supposed it.

I lay still and silent while she spoke, and I soon heard her and her husband leave the cottage. I concluded that *both* the females, now, with me, joint occupiers of the house, still slept, to recover from the fatigues of their disturbed and watchful night. I thought repose in every way, essential to myself, to give me strength to prosecute my inquiries, or indeed to meet the possible contingencies, to be expected from the ambiguous parting words of the pilgrim. I therefore once more strove to sleep, and I succeeded. When I awoke again, I found myself much refreshed, and looking at my watch, I perceived that it was not quite eight o'clock.

My anxiety to know what was going on in the other, and most mysterious, part of the house, induced me to rise from my bed, and venture on a cruise of discovery to the next room. I threw the coverlid across my shoulders, and in this costume, quite *a la Cagot*, I slowly and incautiously slid out of my closet. The window-shutters having been opened by either the pilgrim or the old woman, I had a full view of the chamber and its contents. The table showed that the time had not been idly or badly spent by the travellers. The remnants of bread, cheese, eggs, and sausages, with glasses that bore marks of service, told a tale of good cheer and abundance. On the table stood an ink stand and some paper, with unfinished scraps of writing. These excited my attention more than any other of the

fragments, and I could not resist letting my eye glance for a moment on the scribbled and defaced lines before me. I at once discovered the writing to be in a neat female hand. One or two words, "Father, Mother," and what looked like "duty, honor," and "unbounded attachment," were all that I distinguished: for the reader may believe my honest assertion, that I did not—indeed I *could* not—let my eye rest *more* than a moment on the page, any more than I could let my ear lie for an instant against a door, always excepting cases which involve personal safety or the like.

I cast a wistful glance at the door of the secret chamber, where I was convinced so interesting a subject of inquiry lay concealed. But whether it was feeling or fever that refined or rarified my sentiments, I know not; yet they certainly were at the moment quite too pure to allow of my taking one unauthorized step towards the gratification of my intense curiosity. I accordingly turned into my own quarters again, cautiously avoiding a glance at the room which the old Cogots occupied, and not venturing to look behind me for fear of discovering the appearance of the young one, in all the unloveliness of dishabille.

But was scarcely laid again in my bed, when a timorous tap at the door, and half uttered inquiries from the girl, convinced me that I was not to escape from her persecuting attention. I answered, without looking up, that I was quite well, and wanted nothing whatever. But from that strange impulse which leads us to look at the things we loathe, I could not resist a stolen half glance at this girl, asking her at the same time—

"Are you dressed already, my good girl?"

"Dressed!" echoed she, in a tone of surprise, as if astonished at my imagining the contrary; and she muttered something in unintelligible and imperfect *patois*.

"Pray, don't be offended," said I, "it was only that I did not wish to disturb you so early." And I saw at the same time that she *had* had the delicacy (or the conceit) to wrap herself up, throat and all, full as closely as she had been covered the day before. She was retiring from the door, and I became emboldened in proportion as she was timid. I thought I might venture to some inquiries, so I said, in accents of more civility than she was accustomed to hear from me—

"You were very much disturbed, I fear, last night, as well by me as by other visitors."

"What?" asked she, with all the vacant emphasis of stupidity.

I repeated my observation distinctly.

"Yes, indeed, you did," was her unmeaning reply, accompanied by a sort of abortive laugh that was quite shocking. I would not venture to look at the countenance moving in idiot sympathy with these tones; but I was determined, my eyes firmly close, to prosecute my efforts for information. I thought that the only way to succeed with her was to take her by surprise—to beat down her guard, as I might say, and carry the out works of her caution by a *coup-de-main*.

"And pray," exclaimed I, quickly, "how is the young lady in the other chamber, after such a bad night?" The girl was too far off, and

too much shaded by my door, to let me see her face; but as she might have seen mine, I spoke as abruptly and sternly as I meant to look.

"What?" answered she.

"Come, come," cried I, impatiently, "tell me, like a good girl who is the female that—" But just at this important stage of my cross-examination, I was interrupted by a voice outside, volubly uttering, as the speaker entered the hut—

"What! the house empty—the garrison fled—guns all spiked, I suppose—and, perhaps, a mine ready to spring and blow me up! Ha! I ask you a thousand pardons, Mademoiselle, for entering so uncerimoniously by this ready-made breach, and without a summons to surrender. By the fire of those consuming black eyes, and that rosy blush on your cheek, my dear, I hold you and your whole sex in adoration! Permit me to salute your hand. Nay, don't be frightened, nor shrink away from me after that fashion. Always show a fair front to the enemy, and never turn your back on a friend. That's one of the golden rules of life—so, do now, my lass, give me one embrace."

I really did not hear the girl's reply. I was so provoked at this proof of gross want of taste—at the promiscuous gallantry which could make love to a *Cagot*, that, for the moment, my displeased surprise stifled the satisfaction at first given by the sound of my friend the sergeant's voice, for the reader will have recognized him in the new comer.

"What! you will neither kiss me, speak to me, nor look at me," continued the sergeant. "Why, what do you tremble for, my good girl? Do you think I would do you any harm? By the life and honor of a soldier, I would die first! So, like a sweet, modest little darling as you are, tell me, where is the sick gentleman who came here yesterday evening; and tell him that his friend, Victor Achille Passepartout, sergeant of the ——th infantry of the like, wishes to see him."

"Come in here, sergeant," cried I, "if you can tear yourself away from the charms of that tempting creature."

"Ha! ha! my friend, you are there, are you? So, so, this is your illness, is it? A fit of mountain gallantry—a heart-burn—an amorous ague? I thought as much—" and as he entered with these words, his cap and feather were knocked off his head by the door frame, although he was a short man, and stooped as he came in. In recovering his head-dress, he stumbled against my bed, and he commenced a series of curses on his awkwardness, and apologies to me, until, looking me full in the face, he saw that I was really ill; and he then, with great kindness, began to inquire into my case, and begged me to excuse the levity with which he had treated it. He offered me all sorts of assistance, proposed sending to Luz for the surgeon of his regiment, and took as much (though a different sort of) interest in my illness as one sometimes meets from one's nearest relative and heir at law. I declined the sergeant's offers of aid, telling him that I was in hopes of seeing the military monk, of whose medical skill I had heard high praise.

"What!" cried the sergeant, "would you trust yourself into the hands of that fellow? Why, when he finds you out to be an Eng-

lish man, and heretic, he would think nothing of giving you a passport for purgatory, (in the shape of a dose of physic.) Aye, or for another place, a stage farther on. I know Spain and the monks right well."

"And I know something of human nature," thought I, "of the good side of it too; and I am sure that the man who relieved the poor old persecuted Cagot yesterday, cannot be converted into a fiend to-day. So I thanked the sergeant for his caution, but told him I had no fear of treachery."

"Well, well," replied he, "perhaps you are right after all. I am not a suspicious man—I am dull-sighted enough when my own safety is in question, but I am lynx-eyed for that of my friends; and you may have the satisfaction of knowing that if this priest should poison you, I will have him hanged on the highest pine tree in the district."

I could not help smiling at this consolatory promise, and the sergeant, fancying he had quite composed me, began a detail of his privations in a little temporary shed he occupied since day-break, with a party of ten privates, on the very selva of the frontier, and in sight of the hut where we were.

"Egad, you can see it from this window," said he, pointing across the ravine; and there stands the sentry, striving to warm himself in the smoke from our kitchen fire. He has laid his firelock on the ground though. Very well, he shall have an extra hour for that negligence."

I looked from the bed, and plainly distinguished the turf and moss covered hovel, which resembled the worst kind of huts in the bogs of Ireland and the Scotch highlands; while the smoke, forcing its way up through the sods that formed the pastoral kitchen, and the grey coated sentinel who stood beside, brought forcibly to my recollection the whiskey stills I had so often stumbled on, in trespasses almost as illegal as the secrets they led to.

While I was thus occupied, I observed my visiter keenly reconnoitering the room without, and eyeing the covered ways of the female fortress he had before been approaching.

"Come, come, sergeant," said I, peevishly, "this is too bad; how can you look at, or think of this wretched Cagot girl, with her sallow cheeks and loathsome goitre!"

"Softly, softly, my friend," replied he, in an under tone, "don't hurt her feelings so; she hears you, and her blushes cover her ears."

"Blushes, indeed!"

"Aye, upon my life, like roses on an olive tree. And hark ye, my friend, don't you be so nice in your tastes—beggars can't be choosers. A Cagot girl in these deserts is as natural as a duchess in Paris. Women are women every where. They have all alike their charms for me—I worship the sex—and am idolater enough to admire a protuberance on the throat, just as though it were lower down. But, by the gods, the girl without has a pair of eyes blacker and more burning than any I ever met with."

"Well, well, worship their sacred fires; but let it be in secrecy and silence, that's all I ask of you."

"Agreed, agreed, my friend, my devotions shall not disturb you,

depend upon it. I would rather remove than add to your fever, believe me. But hold, can I be mistaken? It is surely he—yes—I know his lounging gait.”

“Who do you see?” asked I, while the sergeant strained forward at the window.

“That rascal Spaniard, I was forced to check so abruptly yesterday. I thought he was lurking somewhere hereabouts, for the boy who told me of your being here, recounted your having stumbled upon him yesterday; and, to tell you the truth, I was brought here by my anxiety to step between you and any treachery on the part of that scowling blackguard.”

“Many thanks, my good sergeant—I have nothing personal to apprehend from him; but he is a bad one, I have good reason to know, and I cannot think that any good design brings him here now; he should be going in another direction.”

“You know something of him then?”

“Enough to warrant what I say, and to enable me to put you on your guard. He understands and speaks French well.”

“We are but even there,” said the sergeant consequentially—“for I speak Spanish like a Spaniard—just the same.”

“You told me that yesterday,” replied I.

“Yes, and proved it too, I think,” added he, “for how else could I have so soon won my way into the affections of that haughty Arrogonese Countess? How else carry by storm the bulwarks of birth, pride, rank, piety, and the devil knows what? Now I’ll wager that you didn’t discover her to be a countess?”

“No, I’ll be hanged if I did,” said I, smiling; “for she appeared as common a person as any of her party.”

“Canning angel that she is!” cried he; clasping his hands—“Egad, I musn’t forget my appointment with her though. Good bye, my friend, for a while.

“I’ll certainly send for our doctor for you—Adieu!” and he was going off rapidly, when he suddenly added, “The Devil! I had quite forgot that scoundrel—but there he is, winding up directly here; and looking round him as if he were watched, or afraid of being so. There he goes, sharp by the angle of that rock, and into the path leading up to the door. I will stay quietly here, and we shall soon see what he is about.

“Caution the girl not to tell him you are in the house,” said I.

“Sweet little dear! I will whisper it closely and softly to her,” said the sergeant, stepping into the outside room, where he buzzed a few words in a delicate tone; and he came back side-ways on tip-toes, blowing kisses from his fingers at every step, as he looked amorously over his shoulder.

“Now my good sergeant, said I, “remember that the ruffian carries his long knife, and you are unarmed—and though ever so well inclined, I am quite unable to help you in a contest with him.”

“True, egad,” replied he, looking rather anxiously around, “I had forgotten that—but here is your gun.”

“Exactly what I was going to observe to you—it is loaded, and makes you more than a match for him.”

"It's all one—it's all one—gun or no gun, I should fear little from an encounter with such a fellow :—but are the flints good—the powder not damp—is it loaded with ball or shot?—not that I care a sou about the matter, but since one has such a weapon by one—"

"One may as well make the most, while one seems to make least of it! Isn't it so, sergeant?" asked I abruptly, and cutting him short in the middle of a speech, such as we often hear from men who, not satisfied with being sufficiently brave, lessen their own merit in affecting to underrate their enemy, and see more glory in the pretence of despising danger than in the pride of overcoming difficulty.

"Why, as for the matter of that—" said the sergeant—

"Hush!" whispered I—"I hear his heavy tramp at the threshold," and in a moment more the outer door creaked back on its rusty hinges.

"God be praised! Good morning my lass!" said the Spaniard, in mechanical devotion and surly gaiety, and in French, a striking contrast to the cringing tone of his salutation in his own language, as he entered the hut the night before, and was so roughly welcomed by the pilgrim with my double barrelled gun in his hand. "Good morning, I say; why, you do not seem to welcome me. You would rather have seen that vagabond imposter—that *ci-devant* pilgrim—Eh? But he is far out of sight now, and I am as much master here as he was last night, do ye see—so look cheerful, and give me some breakfast."

All this was said with an air of insolent brutality; and I saw that the sergeant was quivering in every limb, not from fear of the ruffian, but with anxiety to attack him. He sat on the side of my bed, the gun across his knees; and his legs involuntarily kept up the nervous motion familiarly called "the Devil's tattoo."

"Keep steady," said I, "or the creaking of the bed will betray you before your time."

"I cannot contain my rage!" muttered he, every word half a dozen times its original length, from the chattering of teeth and stut-tering caused by his emotion.

"You are quite alone," asked the Spaniard.

"Quite," replied the girl.

"Your father and mother are from home?"

"Yes."

"Then give me the gun that your friend, the pilgrim, left here behind him this morning. Give it, I say," continued he, in a boisterous tone, which proved that she hesitated at his first demand—"Give it to me, or, by the Virgin, I'll sacrifice you on the spot!"

The sergeant bounced up but I held him back, by the scanty skirt of his jacket, and forced him down upon his seat.

"I will not give it to you—take it by force if you durst, and you shall be hanged for the crime, like a robber and a villain as you are."

Such, as well as I could catch her *patois*, was the girl's reply, delivered in a firm and gallant tone, astonishing to me, even though I knew her to be aware of protection against the Spaniard's fury.

"Bravo!" exclaimed the sergeant, jumping up once more, and he

was rushing from the room, when I threw myself after him, caught hold of his arm, and whispered—

"Not yet—not yet—let him commit himself fully."

"You are right, my friend," stammered he, stopping close to the door, while I lay down again in bed.

"Insolent reptile!" vociferated the Spaniard to the girl's reply—"Odious and loathsome Cagot, you are not worthy my revenge; but let me pass—I will have the gun—and here I begin my search."

"You shall not enter there while I have life," cried the girl. At these words, I heard the rapid closing of a door and a key turned quickly in the lock. I knew immediately that it must be that of the secret chamber, where I was now more than ever convinced the lovely female was concealed; and, in addition to my head-ache and fever, I burned and shook with an anxiety full as forcible as the sergeant's. I prepared to quit the bed abruptly when the sergeant in his turn held me down.

"Not yet—not yet—" said he: "let the villain attempt violence."

"Stand back, wretch!" roared the Spaniard, and a clatter of chairs or tables told that a struggle was commenced.

"Help, help!" screamed the girl.

Whack! sounded the door of my room, as the sergeant burst through it—and smack! said the butt end of my gun, as it came in contact with the Spaniard's head, with a force which I thought must have shattered the stock, or fractured the skull. A war-whoop yell accompanied the sergeant's blow—the heavy carcass of the Spaniard flopped against the floor—the girl shrieked—and just as I emerged from my room, the blanket thrown hastily round me, I saw her disappear into the secret chamber opposite, and heard the door forcibly bolted inside.

The Spaniard lay on the floor; the sergeant flung himself upon him, holding him by the throat, thundering forth execrations of untranslatable variety and vigour; while Ranger, unexpected by the whole party, darted upon the prostrate ruffian, and shook and worried him with all the energy of tooth and nail. Satisfied that the girl was safe, the sanctuary she defended and fled to, secure, and the Spaniard stunned and disabled, I looked about anxiously for wherewithal to bind him, and soon found a piece of rope, used by the old Cagot for tying up his fagots. With this, the sergeant and myself bound the Spaniard's arms well behind his back, with less tenderness than he might have experienced from the most brutal executioner—in fact we had no mercy on him. I took his formidable knife from its sheath; and on examining my gun and the fellow's head, I to my great surprise ascertained that neither was materially hurt by their momentary junction and instantaneous divorce.

During the whole of this process, which did not occupy much more time than what might be consumed in reading this record of it, the enemy, as I may fairly call our prisoner, showed the most evident symptoms of a craven and contemptible spirit. He was overwhelmed with astonishment and terror, at the suddenness of the assault and the probable consequences of his subjection. But he did not utter a word, his scowling visage looking unspeakable things at

the sergeant and myself. The former was too busily employed, in double-cording and in double-cursing his foe, to pay attention to the contortions of pain, fear, and fury, so strongly depicted on his countenance, while every knot that he tied, and each additional twist he gave the rope, drew forth a panting interjectional snort, that seemed to come from the inmost depths of the sergeant's nervous system. He ceased at length, and taking his knee from off his victim's carcass, he wiped the sweat from his own brow, and looked round pleasedly at the security which he had earned by it.

As the Spaniard rolled and writhed upon the floor, the sergeant could not restrain the expressions of his delight. He had no moderation in his triumph, and thus proved himself an imperfect hero. So I trust my readers have not begun to take him for *mine*. As for myself, I had played but a very inferior part in this drama; and its being so happily concluded, left no further necessity for my presence; so I wrapped my blanket closer, and retired to my closet, leaving the sergeant to the enjoyment of heaping loads of abuse on his fallen foe. As I crept into bed, not much the better of all my exertion, I heard the following fragments of my trusty ally's reproachful apostrophe, to his victim, over whom I saw him standing:—

"Yes, you scoundrel, you are there, thanks to this good arm and this brave heart!" (slapping his hand upon his breast, three or four times;) "aye, twist and turn like a snake that has lost its sting," (flourishing the dagger-knife over his head.) "What! you are muttering are you?—invoking some rank devil, I'll warrant it; but you must pray with your hands unclasped, and let your elbows knock together, closer than they ever did, since you gave up your dancing master. You villain! to attack a poor defenceless woman! Woman, the loveliest, the most angelic of earth's blessings, or man's delights! Woman! the masterpiece of nature."

And so he ran on, in the very superlative of bombast and burlesque, for longer than would be supportable in the recital; and he was at length stopped only by the entrance of the old Cagot woman, and of no less a personage than Father Munoz himself, who had obeyed the call of his quondam friend the pilgrim, and came promptly to my relief, for which he had been summoned.

"Mary, the most pure, I salute you!"* piously ejaculated the monk, but this short prayer was all I could distinctly understand.

**Ave Maria purissima!*—the entrance salutation of a pious Spaniard.

CHAPTER VIII.

From my situation in the closet bed, I was not able to observe the effects of this arrival on the countenances of the various parties to the scene without ; and little information was to be gathered from the confused babbling which immediately took place. The sergeant burst forth into a vituperative attack against his prisoner ; the old woman sent out screaming inquiries for her precious little girl ; and the medical monk, totally forgetting the object of his visit, uttered pious and sorrowful ejaculations at the scandal to his country and his cause, in what he saw and heard of his compatriot's situation and conduct. The ruffian did not speak a word.

The old woman at length succeeded in learning where the girl had taken refuge ; and I saw her enter the chamber, into which she was cautiously admitted through the half open door. She came out in a very few minutes, and crossed over to pay me a visit. She had acquired ample information as to the cause of the sergeant's presence in her hut, and the still more unwelcome intrusion of the Spaniard, and she opened upon me a battery of blessings, and thanks for the part I had taken in the rescue ; and then made anxious inquiries as to my illness. All these matters I cut as short as possible, being chiefly alive to the subject of my own curiosity ; and, without any regular plan for coming at information, I at last found some.

"Pray now, my worthy dame," said I, "do tell me, without keeping up the mystery any longer, how is the lady in the opposite room, for I know all about the secret of her concealment ? Has she been much alarmed ? Come, come, answer me frankly ; I tell you again I know the secret."

"Oh ! pray then, Sir, for the love of Heaven, do not betray it to any one of those persons outside ; Mademoiselle would be ruined were it known."

"Never fear, never fear ; I will be discreet, but how is she ?"

"Oh, pretty well, Sir ; she has great courage, but this was almost too much for her—the risk of discovery was dreadful."

"Yes, if it had not been for your daughter, that scoundrel would certainly have found her out."

"Sir !" said the old crone.

"I say it was your daughter's spirited resistance, that saved the room door from being forced open, and the lady from discovery. Did they not tell you that ?"

The woman looked stupidly at me, as if all her stock of intelligence had been exhausted ; but I did not, as I have before remarked, find her dullness so disgusting as the girl's, and seeing that my mention of her daughter did not touch her sympathies, and that she began to busy herself about my ptisan, et cetera, I let the conversation drop, satisfied with the confession I had obtained as to the concealed female, and delighted to hear that she was still, as I might say, within arm's length of my observation.

While I ruminated on all that was passing, the voices in the outer room suddenly ceased their clamour, and the sergeant came in, the gun in his hand, and seated himself beside my bed. The old woman immediately retired, and I saw her slipping into the secret chamber, which opened instantly to her gentle knock.

"Well, said I, to my panting and exhausted companion, as we wiped his oozing brows; "well, you have done your work in good style; but why do you lose sight of your prisoner? He may escape."

"Leave me alone for that, my friend. Escape! *sacre!* I should catch him, were he to gain the top of Mont Perdu. I am as active as an lizard—let me alone. No, no, he'll not escape me. I have left him with that monk to confess I suppose. They are a pair of scoundrels together I do believe, for amongst these scum of the Faith there is nothing but rascality. I am watching them—and should he stir, I am quite ready to lodge the contents of this in his body—but you see I did not want it, to enable me to overcome the fellow—there it is you see, not even cocked!"

I passed over this ingratitude to the weapon which had served him so well though so silently, and I paid him some compliments on his courage and address. I heard the priest, in the meantime exhorting his disgraced follower to a course of more honorable conduct than he had lately pursued; and in a little time he made his appearance at the door. On seeing me, he seemed somewhat ashamed of his forgetfulness of the purpose of his coming to the hut.

"This, then, is the gentleman who is ill?" asked he, looking round apparently for the old woman.

"Yes, this is he, your reverence," said the sergeant, in a bitter tone, "and have a care that you treat him well and fairly. Look to his fever, never mind his politics; feel his pulse, but don't meddle with his conscience. Recollect it is medicine, and not religion, you have now to administer—and take a friend's advice."

This last phrase was accompanied by an expressive gesture of tucking-up significance—but the monk heeded it not. His wrapt and enthusiastic look told that he was superior to paltry hints and ignoble apprehensions. He came forward calmly, and with a steady hand he felt my wrist, smiled assuringly, and nodded his head with that happy air of indifference, the good effect of which every skilful doctor knows full well.

"It is nothing, said he, "I will attend you in a few minutes but first, Master Sergeant, let us despatch the affair of this unhappy culprit outside. What do you intend to do with him?"

"Eh, what do with him?" replied the sergeant, completely thrown off his centre by the monk's commanding air and tone, and by the contemptuous indifference with which he had received the bectoring lecture, which the sergeant expected would have produced a very different effect. "Do with him?" repeated he, turning to me, "Egad, I don't exactly know—I had not begun to think of that yet."

"Perhaps then you will liberate him?" said the monk, calmly.

"Liberate him!" repeated the sergeant two or three times; but the echo was reverberated in tones of redoubled noise and emphasis: "What! let such a villain loose upon the world, to violate all the

rights of men, women, and children—to make forcible entries, God knows where—to lay violent hands on the devil knows what——”

“Hush, hush your blaspheming voice!” exclaimed the monk, in a loud tone of authority, and raising his hand high above the little sergeant, who had started up, and stood as erect as a recruit under the measuring rod. “Commit not this outrage against heaven, joining the name of the Most High with that of the arch fiend. You declaim against an offence to man, while you are insulting your Maker!”

“*Sacre! Peste!* I had no notion of it,” said the sergeant, evidently a little frightened at the accusation—“God knows”——

“Silence!” interrupted the monk, “God knows all things, and scorns your paltry appeal.”

“Well, but, *Sacre Nom de——*”

“Dare not to finish the impious exclamation, nor brave the offended Deity!” uttered the monk, accompanying the thunder of his lungs with a lightning flash from his protuberant and electrical eyes.

“Was there ever the like of this?” asked my crest-fallen friend, fairly beaten, upon the field of all his recent glory, by this domineering ecclesiastic; “Did you ever hear such a bullying bravo?—He won’t let me speak a word, either of question or answer. What must I do with him?”

“Listen to him quietly, and keep yourself cool,” said I.

“Well, Sir, is your mind made up?” continued the priest, in an elevated voice, his looks reflecting the warmth of his heated feelings. “Are you decided yet? Will you give the man his freedom, or bring disgrace in his person on the sacred cause he serves?”

“Sacred cause, indeed!” murmured the sergeant.

“Pray keep silent one moment, and suffer me to speak a word,” retorted the monk, in a tone of most authoritative *entreaty*. “Would you, I say, bring shame on the cause of religion and loyalty, because one of its followers, in mistaken zeal, trenced upon, although he did not even overstep, the strict line of the law.

“Why, as for that——”

“Do let me speak, I say. Remember that this man is a champion of the faith, filled with ardour for the cause of his God, his king, and his country. He knows the sacrilegious rebels are in arms, that Mina and his bandit horde are close upon the frontier. He burns to engage once more in the holy conflict of the faithful against the infidel, and to enable him to join his brethren in arms, he begged a loan of a weapon which he knew lay idly here.”

“Begged a loan! The rascal!” uttered the sergeant, in a suppressed voice, which he only ventured to let slip through his teeth, as it were.

“And would you, for this offence against that strict rule which forbids us to carry arms upon your neutral ground, embroil your government and ours? Would you throw discredit on the righteous and the loyal, and give a triumph to the vile revolutionary band that lords it over Spain, and threatens France?”

“Tell me,” said the sergeant, recovering a little his wonted jocular air, “tell me, my good Sir, what penance do you inflict upon your lying lay brethren?” and he winked at me as he spoke.

"What do you dare to say?" thundered the monk, more loudly and violently than ever. "Would you, a Christian and a catholic, venture a ribald jest against the sacred mysteries of the church? And is it for you, while offending against her holy laws, to become the judge of a brother sinner? Would you—"

"Most pious, revered, and venerable father," exclaimed the sergeant, with a mixture of sarcasm and *canui*, "I am quite, perfectly, thoroughly convinced of my own errors, your worthy follower's virtues, and your infallibility. Take him away with you, upon condition that you leave me alone. Off with him, for the sake of heaven—I beg pardon, for *my* sake. There is his innocent little pocket-knife—cut his cords with it; yonder is the door, you know the way out; and I pray the saints and angels, that, once beyond its threshold, I may never see either of your pious and loyal faces again."

"Quite exhausted by this tirade, the poor sergeant resumed his seat, twisting his mustachios, in evident mortification at having been thus bearded by the unwhiskered enthusiast, that gave so formidable an illustration of the church militant on earth.

I must leave the reader to picture the air of solemn delight with which the monk proceeded to the next room to liberate his worthy associate in the cause of legitimate tyranny; and the unsatisfied and harassed appearance of the sergeant, as he opened my window and made his exit, to regain his quarters beyond the ravine, the first having assured me he would return to me in a few minutes, and the latter promising to come and see me on the morrow.

When left quite to myself, I could have laughed heartily at the whimsical contrast of character which I had just witnessed; but the immediate return of the monk, having let his countryman loose, broke in upon my unsocial enjoyment. In his capacity of physician he was much more attractive than in his holy calling; and I congratulated myself that he was my bodily, and not my spiritual comforter. His whole manner inspired complete confidence. I saw he was clever, and believed him when he assured my illness was trifling. By this means he effected more than half the cure; and I think my readers will excuse the detail of all the other means employed to perfect my recovery. I took his advice, and followed his prescriptions. He accepted my thanks, but refused the proffered fee, giving me to understand that he practised physic, not professionally, but for the good of his fellow-creatures—a very correct distinction—as I thought. Before my doctor left the hut, I was infinitely better; and by nightfall, when only under the care of the old woman, for the girl did not again come near me, I pronounced myself, to myself, fairly convalescent.

The day passed over in a quiet stillness that seemed almost unnatural to a place that had heretofore been the scene of such continued bustle, variety, and adventure. Nothing occurred to break the monotony, but the old male Cagot's arrival to his dinner about noon, and his return once more from the woods at nightfall. I heard him throw down his fagots at the door, and, with a few words to interrupt him, he eat his homely meal, and then retired to rest. The old cat occasionally purred an accompaniment to its master's munching, or mew'd a request for a scanty morsel from his table. But at sun-

set, or soon after, the whole hut was hushed into a most desolate state of repose.

Ruminating on the events of the night and morning which had passed by, I was not more amused at comparing the different characters extraneous, as I might say, to the hut, than I was interested in dwelling on the consideration of those which seemed legitimately its inmates. The character of the poor Cagots appeared to me in a far brighter hue than my former impressions had given to it: the unobtrusive placidity of the man—the ready activity and kind assiduity of the old woman—and the spirited exertion of the young one, all convinced me that they were not quite so low in the scale of humanity as prejudice would place them; and the sergeant's eulogium on the eyes and blushes of the girl had, after all, I believe, their influence in awakening these favorable sentiments. But above all subjects, the hidden female was the one that at once interested and tormented me the most. Determined to leave no fair measure untried to obtain some further information about her, I was resolved to have recourse to the girl once more, as, more immediately than the old woman, in contact with the concealed heroine, with whom she had clearly passed the greater part of the day. I determined to make an absolute and unlimited offer of my services to this damsel, be the causes of her concealment, or the means of service what they might. I therefore called the old woman, and proposed to her to let her daughter relieve her attentions upon me for awhile, although had I not other reasons for the presence of the girl, I could have readily dispensed with both. She made some hesitation, as if her apprehensive qualms were again rising. My smothered disgust was somewhat revived by this, but I kept it down, and repeated my request. The woman muttered something indistinctly, left the room, and proceeded to that where her precious charge had all day remained. In a very few minutes she came back, accompanied by the limping girl.

"Come here, my good girl," said I, with a smooth-tongued patronizing tone, "I am anxious to know how you have recovered your alarm—tell me."

"I am quite well, sir, thank you."

"And the—young lady," added I quickly, to try what would be the effect of the rapid question upon her, not that I had now any notion of her affecting a concealment of what the old woman had avowed—"how is *she*? What is she doing? Does she want my assistance? Can I be of any use to her? Tell me all this now, like a good girl."

I made these inquiries in French, my *patois* not being sufficiently fluent to keep pace with my impatient curiosity.

"Remember what the pilgrim said to you at parting!" replied she in her mountain diction. "Ask no questions, and take no heed of who comes or goes. Good night, sir," and with these words she left the room, and quietly closed the door.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS,
OR
TALES OF THE ROADSIDE ;
PICKED UP IN THE FRENCH PROVINCES
BY
A WALKING GENTLEMAN.

"I love France so well that I will not part with a Village of it ; I will have it all mine."—KING HENRY V.

A NEW EDITION,
REVISED AND CORRECTED ;
WITH AN ORIGINAL INTRODUCTION, AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,
BY THE AUTHOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
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THE
CAGOT'S HUT.

CONTINUED.

Affairs that walk,
As they say spirits do, at midnight, have
In them a wilder nature than the business
That seeks despatch by day.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE CAGOT'S HUT.

CHAPTER IX.

I could not for some time exactly comprehend the nature of the occult sentiment, under the influence of which I acquiesced so calmly in the orders of this girl, and which seemed to inspire me with a feeling actually bordering on respect and regard for beings of an order so very inferior as I considered those around me. Even the old grey cat seemed not quite excluded from its fair proportion of this growing weakness of my nature; and I once or twice rebuked Ranger for the unmannerly growling in which he indulged, as the green eyes of Grimalkin beamed intrusively at the half open door. But from well examining the bent of my thoughts, I became convinced that all this, which seemed so strange, was the natural result of association and sympathy. I could trace the emanation of every feeling to the main one of anxiety and interest in the situation and circumstances of the hidden female. My one casual glimpse of her person, my ignorance of her name, her objects in concealment, and the causes which led to it, combined to throw an air over the whole situation, to which I cannot apply any other name than romantic, and tended to tinge my mind with a coloring that I must, I think, venture to call *chivalric*.

There are, certainly, moments in life, when, though we may wish, may labor, to be common-place in our sensations, and matter-of-fact in our conduct, we cannot succeed. A tide of feeling will rush upon us, too powerful for the dykes and mounds raised up by reason and philosophy. Our minds sink under the flood of weakness—if it be so—which flows warmly over, impregnating, and probably purifying, every thought. For these moments may surely be considered as our best, the true intervals of enjoyment, when we throw off the thralldom of social restrictions, and revel in a boundless realm of freedom and romance. It is in such times that the imagination fixes on some object, with an interest more than real—an exaggerated intensity, creating an atmosphere around, and giving to the meanest

things within its influence, a character not properly their own; as the fragrance of the rose envelops, and might seem to breathe from, the veriest weed that crawls beneath it. And such was the state of feeling which procured for the Cagot family a degree of consideration on my part, that was due to my excited interest for the unknown female, to whose fate they seemed allied, and in whom all my thoughts were centred for the while.

I had slept too much during the day to be inclined for a further indulgence in that vital, but to me, most irksome loss of time and sacrifice of useful thought. Besides, as night approached I felt all my anxious curiosity increase, as if it were the most probable time for the arrival of the expected new comers, half promised by those cautious warnings of the pilgrim, which the girl's monition confirmed. I lay, therefore, wide awake, in spite of the strong recommendations and anxious wishes to the contrary on the part of my two nurses; for while the old one strove to put me to sleep by the lullaby of her advice, the young one frequently listened at the door to ascertain its effects upon me. Finding this state of perturbed idleness insufferably wearisome, and that my tide of appetite was fairly on the flow, I at length declared loudly to the woman that I was determined to get up and partake of some supper in the next room. I gave no time for the expression of the discontent or alarm which I knew this announcement must excite; for I followed it up rapidly by a soothing speech, addressed to both the women, whom I had summoned to the door of my closet from the outer room, where they had been silently keeping watch—not for my wants alone, but, as I shrewdly conjectured, for the arrival looked for as well by them as by me.

"I am, you see, resolved to get up, my good woman," said I, "so there is no use in attempting to dissuade me. But have no alarm; I am neither inclined nor able to do any harm to any one, or to interrupt, in any way, the persons whom I know you expect. I shall sit by the fire, and promise you to neither look, nor listen for any information which you or the lady may be anxious to keep from me. Neither will I take any notice whatever of who comes, or who goes—your own words, my girl. But I cannot lie here any longer—I am cramped and wearied; and I must have something to eat, I don't care what, for I am hungry enough to devour any thing. So now do you, my kind dame, prepare whatever you can give me; and you my lass, go to the lady beyond, and tell her 'o have no apprehension, but, on the contrary, to rely upon my good wishes and anxiety to serve her if in my power."

My discourse concluded, the women whispered a moment together and the old one merely saying, "Very well, sir, we will do as you lik—"they went to fulfil the offices severally assigned to them.

Well pleased with myself for my exertion, and with them for their compliance. I was soon equipped, and seated by the fire in the outer room, which I avoid calling the kitchen, only from the fear of degrading (in the reader's imagination) the principal apartment of the hut. The old mistress of the place began, with every appearance of good will, to prepare somewhat for the satisfaction of my palate. As animal food was not, in her estimation, adapted to my

imperfectly recovered state, she sought to furnish me with a more innocent diet; and she accordingly brought forth from a little recess in the wall, a vessel of goat's milk, which lay, till wanted, in a stream of water cold as the rock it sprang from, which flowed in perpetual course down a channel within the house. A portion of this pure milk, was placed in an earthen vessel to boil, and while it was giving notice of the coming fermentation, my hostess added a couple of wooden spoonsful of the flour of the large grained Asiatic wheat, called generally with us, Indian corn; but in the south of France *bled d'Espagne*. While the porridge thickened and simmered, a little *cassonade* (brown sugar) was sprinkled over, a bit of cinnamon flung in, and a tea spoon full of orange flower water (brought from the secret chamber) added by the girl—and finally a brown soup-plate full of the whole composition was placed before me, forming, as the old woman vivaciously exclaimed “a mess of *cruchade*, for which any poor Cagot might fairly sell his birth-right.” I really could not help thinking so too, as I swallowed this excellent preparation, considering that the common heritage of a Cagot is degradation and distress, less palatable than even the meanest preparation of the *cruchade* as it is generally eaten, simply with salt, and without any of the delicate appliances which favored mine. A couple of eggs poached (my own share of the cookery;) and a salad, of wild chicory, onions, and beet-root, completed my supper—which was also, be it remembered, my breakfast and dinner; and I began to yawn and stretch out my legs and arms, in the true after-enjoyment of a simple and hearty meal, when all the extended thews and sinews of body and limbs were suddenly contracted and braced up, by the sound of rapid and loud whisperings in the secret chamber.

I looked around me. The old woman sat at one corner of the fire place—the cat at the other—both eying me with feline scrutiny. The girl had disappeared; and I was satisfied that the whispered interchange of sounds within was between her and the mysterious female. While the girl had sat near me a few minutes before, muffled up and mute, I could not help from time to time drawing comparisons in my own mind, between her sluggard gesture and position, and the graceful figure I had seen in the same place the preceding night, its speaking attitude and eloquent contour, as the pilgrim recited his stirring communication. This mental contrast was no infringement of the compact made with the women of the hut; and as long as I abstained from asking or seeking information on the secret object of my curiosity, I felt free to cogitate as much as I thought proper. But all my occupation in that way was put to an end by the whispering within—and all my scrupulous forbearance in such cases was put in peril by the increasing loudness in which one of the voices indulged.

“Good Heavens! can she be scolding?” thought I. “Is she, after all, concealed here for some intrigue of passion, hot of politics—some violent termagant, fallen foul at last of her poor stupid Cagot confidante?—and who knows that she may not have been making free with the brandy bottle?”

This climax of horrible conjecture thrilled through every fibre of

my enthusiasm, and I started up to take refuge in my bed from such fancies, and the still increasing sounds which fed them. The old woman saw and seemed to approve my intention; and I was hurried off, when a totally new turn was given to my feelings, by the conviction that one or two words which struck upon my ear, proceeded from the voice of a man. The sight of a foot-print was not more startling to Crusoe in the desert than was this sound to me—but from a different cause, for my sensations were purely those of pleasure. I shook off at once the load of mortifying misgivings which had begun to oppress me; and, satisfied that my secret heroine was better employed than I had for a moment fancied her, I only hastened my movements to bed, where I was less likely to be an interruption to what was going on, or to acquire any useful knowledge of it.

As I hurried into bed, a thousand different notions rushed upon me. The first was, that it must have been the pilgrim, who was come back to the hut; but I abandoned that, from the conviction, that he would not have avoided seeing me in the first instance, nor have stolen in by a back door or window, as this new visitor must have done. I next thought that it might be some one of the Spanish patriots—Perhaps Mina himself—come to this rendezvous to meet his French partisans, for strong notions existed at the time, that the victorious chief would push forward his successes, and even attempt an invasion of France. But I abandoned this fancy, as soon as formed—for it appeared too extravagant a risk. My conjectures were all, however, much interrupted, and my efforts to keep in ignorance of the strange person thwarted, by the seemingly careless and joyous tone with which he loudly talked, as if despising concealment.

My door was of that loose construction, common to such lowly habitations as the one which I occupied. It was impossible to close it, so as to shut out even the imperfect sounds of voices in the other part of the house, and my attempts at humming a tune, talking to Ranger, and haranguing the old woman, were not sufficient to keep me from an occasional involuntary acquirement of information as to my fellow occupants of the Cagot's hut. The voice of the stranger was manly but delicate—the tone high but not boisterous—the accent good, and the pronunciation pure Parisian—a very agreeable contrast to the rude *Patois* of the Cagot family, the provincial twang of the pilgrim, and the sergeant's Gascon drawl. I was satisfied, at any rate, that though ignorant of the *who?* as to the stranger's identity, I might answer the *what?* by saying "a gentleman;" and as to the *why?* and the *wherefore?* of his present visit, I left their solution to time and his own good pleasure. There was also something in the varied modulations of his voice that convinced me he was a young man; and I had made up my mind, even without other proofs of tenderness, that he was a lover. I set him down for my heroine's hero and mine, and though sometimes unlucky in these allotments of character, I was this time, at least, not wrong.

The first words I heard in a connected phrase clearly related to myself, and they were probably meant to meet my ear distinctly, as the door of the secret room evidently lay a little open.

"Yes, yes, my Malvide, you may safely rely on his being no enemy

THE CAÇOT'S MYST.

of yours or mine. His aiding to seize that ruffian is sufficient proof—you are justified in your confidence—so let us not dream of dangers, but indulge in hope and joy.

"Oh, while I have you with me I can imagine nothing evil;" murmured a half suppressed voice; and both one and the other blended in a confused and tender interchange of sounds, which no doubt spoke volumes to the lovers, but told me nothing. Their garrulous babbling went on with great animation for full an hour, a broken sentence reaching me at intervals, in my own despite, but betraying nothing, for I carefully avoided the context. But it was clear to me that the lovers were placed in some difficulty and peril more than common, although it has been seen that they seemed agreed to scout all notions of danger.

Finding it impossible to sleep, I had taken from my knapsack what I may justly call my commonplace-book, for it consisted of scraps of all kinds, in prose and rhyme, rough sketches in pencil, and memoranda of expenses; and I was beguiling the time by noting down, as was my custom, some hints for future expansion; when I heard the chords of the guitar I had before observed, swept with a masterly and animating touch, which gave a tone and character to that instrument, that I had only from time to time heard equalled by some Spanish professors, but never knew approached by a performer of any other nation than theirs.

After several bold and varied preludes and voluntaries, the young stranger, for it was plainly the touch of a manly hand, played with considerable effect some popular Spanish airs, among others, "Riego's March," that most stirring composition, connecting the name of one of Spain's purest patriots, with the splendid actions of what, at that time, falsely appeared to be the Spanish nation.

While the performer played, my heroine (or rather let me call her Malvide, to prove the better acquaintance of myself and my readers with her,) Malvide could not suppress the frequent expression of her delight; and when he struck the final chord of the march he had three or four times repeated, she said something, with an air of entreaty, to which he replied,

"To be sure, to be sure, though my voice has been latterly in a ruder kind of practice."

A new symphony sounded softly from the strings, and a voice of manly melody sung an air, which was to me quite new, though bearing all the character of those Seguidillas, of Moorish origin, which are so peculiar to Spain, and which unite such a harmony of plaintive and simple tenderness.

Malvide seemed as much pleased as I was with this new specimen of her lover's talent, for she honored it with full half a dozen encores; and as I could not then resist attempting to score it down in my book, I hope I may be excused transplanting it into the one I am now writing, even should it (which I do not believe) have already found its way into print in England.*

*I have observed that the very air I here intended to have given to my readers, has found its way into one of the late numbers of the "National Melodies," with words which have put me so much out of conceit with my own imitation of the original Spanish ones, that prudence, as well as justice, tells me to omit the song altogether.

The words are a sort of imitation of those which I caught imperfectly from the performer; or rather a paraphrase of the ideas, for I could not catch their expression connectedly.

CHAPTER X.

While I was still occupied in noting down the song, for some time after the first voice and instrument had ceased, my imperfect knowledge of music not keeping pace with the performer's fine execution, I was roused from my task by a gentle knock at the door, which rather startled me, as the old woman always bustled in very unceremoniously. The notion that it might be the stranger, glanced across my mind. "Give yourself the trouble to come in," said I, in the courteous but overstrained parlance of the country, and I sat bolt upright in my bed, to receive my visiter with all due honor; but down I sank again very quickly, turning my face to the wall, and throwing up my shoulder as a protection, when I caught a glimpse of the girl of the house, putting her hooded head into the room.

"Are you awake, Sir?" asked she, and I thought a titter was mixed with the question.

"No," answered I sulkily, rather offended at the impertinence, without considering that my rapid retreat beneath the bed-clothes, was visible enough.

"I am sorry for it," replied she, almost laughing fairly out, "for there is a gentleman in the house who wished much to pay his respects to you."

The *naïveté* of the girl's tone, and the quaint *patois* idiom, were of themselves sufficient to remove my ill humor; but the announcement of the visit I had half anticipated consummated the return of my composure, and I broke cover, as I may call it, still more rapidly than I had sought refuge.

"Show him in by all means—he does me infinite honor—I am broad awake, and shall be enchanted to see him," exclaimed I, in a breath, bouncing out of bed. The girl took flight precipitately, and I commenced dressing; but before I had made much progress, a bolder knock at the door announced my visiter, and he entered simultaneously with my movement to admit him.

The moment I saw his face I knew it for one that had somewhere before been familiar to me; more I did not recollect. It was evident that the recognition was reciprocal, and he soon proved that his memory possessed more retail qualities than mine, which only had the power of wholesale recollection.

"This is indeed, Sir," said the stranger, putting forth his hand, "unexpected and may to me prove a fortunate meeting. I little

thought, when I last had the pleasure of seeing you with our friend Vinaroz, that our next rencontre should be in these wild scenes."

I shook with much cordiality the proffered hand; for the mention of my friend at once brought to mind that I really had met this young man more than once, at his hospitable mansion, near Paris; where was frequently united all that was distinguished and respectable among Vinaroz's countrymen, (for he was a Spaniard,) with much of other nations, that was talented and liberal—he himself was both. Among the many Frenchmen of reputation I was there in the habit of mixing with, several were unknown to me by name, and such was the case with the stranger. His frankness soon put an end to my fears that I had before known his name and now forgot it; for he continued to speak, after my short reply to his salutation.

"Although we have never been formally introduced, the house in which we have before now associated, is a guarantee to both that we may freely trust in each other; but the circumstances that have thrown us together would have justified the confidence I meant to give you, even when I supposed that I had never seen you before."

I did not perhaps quite agree with this generous opinion; but as I had no confidence to give and all to receive, I did not check his enthusiasm—certain that I could not be betrayed, and that he *should* not. I therefore said, for I saw that he waited for my reply,

"Depend upon it, you are safe in whatever you may say to me. I pledge my honor not to abuse your good opinion, and I shall be happy to be of service to you;—but I must in candor premise that I am pretty sure I know a good deal of your present purposes." He stared wide at this. "That is," continued I, "as far as they are connected with your visit here, no more. For instance, I know there is a lady concealed in the house, whom you are come to visit, and with whom you have passed the last two hours—but whatever your connexion may be I know not, and I have no wish to pry into so delicate a secret."

He pressed my hand with warmth in his and said,

"You are right so far; I freely confess it. My visit here was to the lovely person whose concealment you have discovered. But I cannot tell you more at present: you know but half the fact; nor can I confide all just now, for reasons arising solely from her feelings—mine would prompt me to tell every thing, for I hate a half confidence, and your conduct in this house entitles you to ours most fully."

"Pray do not go further—" said I; "I am better pleased to know only what I do—if at any future time, when you know me better, you and your fair friend may think well of giving me your entire confidence, my self-esteem will be more gratified than would be my curiosity in possessing it now."

"Well, well, then," said he, "since you consent to our reserve, and make yourself a party to it, you must not reproach me hereafter if you find that it has been greater than you approve."

"I shall freely acquit you of every thing unfair or unhandsome."

"Good! the time is fast approaching, then—perhaps to-morrow—when I may require your aid in furthering my happiness and secur-

ing her safety. Things are in a distracted state just here—events come on fast and hotly—a crisis is at hand—and my fate is in the balance."

This was spoken with that air which accompanies the utterance of things that the speaker forgets are known only to himself—when the mind is abroad, looking widely into "coming events," and enveloped, as it were, in the shadows which they cast before them. The stranger seemed for a moment possessed with that unconsciousness, the frequent distinction of high minds and ardent spirits. He paused for a few minutes, and he looked as if he held communion with mighty aspirations.

I marked him as he stood. He was scarcely above the middle height, but he did just pass it. He was dark complexioned, and his profusion of black hair, whiskers, and mustachios, would have given, perhaps, an air of fierceness to his countenance, had it not been softened by a warm glow upon his cheek, and a brilliancy of eye quite foreign to aught of violence. His muscular form assorted well with the half military undress, a grey frock coat and vest, black handkerchief, and pantaloons of dark green, edged with scarlet. He wore short boots which showed marks of rough travelling, and inside his frock I perceived a black belt, but it had no weapon then.

He soon recovered from the fit of abstraction which had absorbed him, and he accepted my offer of the only chair which the room contained, my sketch-book and lamp being removed from it to the little table. I sat down on the beside, and he spoke

"I had almost forgotten you, or rather I should say *myself* in the vast field of thought which opened suddenly before me; but I must come back to mere personal considerations—yet that notion is not so narrow as to embrace myself alone. No, there is one other person combined with every feeling of my heart, more than myself, whose safety and well-being is dearer—much dearer than mine—need I point out the person more clearly?"

"No, no," said I, "I want no further clue for the labyrinth of your sensations."

"'Tis well—you understand me—and I am satisfied. Every hour that passes is pregnant with events that are to us of infinite importance. The mighty struggle now going on, between reason and freedom on the one hand, and bigotry and despotism on the other, involves us in its career, so intimately and so deeply, that our fate is in suspense till that of Spain is decided. At present all looks well. The good cause triumphs—the really righteous cause—that of virtue and justice in all their grandest elements and attributes, against the gross abuses which outrage nature and degrade mankind.—All may continue well—but reverses may be at hand, and the threatening aspect of this frontier army, give cause for apprehension. Promptness and energy may be required in the measures which I, and the object of my cares must take! Aid may be necessary to secure her safety, and *that* I may find alone from some stranger's hand. I would not compromise you in aught, but I do not hesitate to ask you to hold yourself ready for a day or two, should your time and your health

permit, to assist in any step which may become expedient, to serve the lady in question, and which she herself may point out."

"I pledge myself to do so," answered I, unhesitatingly.

"You relieve my mind, then," replied he, "from the only fear that could oppress it, in this season of triumph and in this brief and stolen visit of love and happiness. One honorable man, from whom she may obtain the protection I may be unable to afford, was alone requested—and all that has passed since your arrival here forbids me to doubt that I have found such a one in you."

I bowed my acknowledgment of the compliment, and he shook my hand firmly as he went on.

"Now, then, one concluding entreaty, and pray do not take it ill. It is, that you will not seek to discover more of my beloved one's secret than she has already permitted me to divulge—that you will not attempt to see her, nor interfere with her in any way, till my return, or a letter from me may authorize your full acquaintance—but that you will continue the course of conduct, while you are here, which has already gained you so much esteem and gratitude."

"I freely promise all that you demand," was my reply.

"I have nothing more to require," said he. "And now you will excuse my saying, adieu. Time is precious, and it presses fast. Every moment passed away from my Malvide, is, to my feelings, so much lost. You will not take this ill, but make allowances still greater than I can ask for. Farewell, at least for a while. Before the dawn I must be away from hence. This neighborhood is alive with dangers—but before I set out I may again disturb you, to trespass on you with my parting acknowledgments, and final request for the protection of her who is so dear to me."

After the interchange of a few words, he quitted the room; and I had just laid myself upon the bed when he returned.

"There is one point more," said he, "on which I did not think it necessary to touch; but where political opinions are in doubt, one should not, in these times, take any thing *for granted*. I might safely make an exception, I think, with regard to you; but you cannot be offended at my taking the better course, and ascertaining whether we feel alike on the momentous question which now agitates the world."

I was about to reply, but he continued—

"Permit me one observation. From the society in which I have been in the habit of meeting you I am quite sure you are on the side of all that is liberal in Europe; but I remember to have heard you on one occasion express yourself strongly against some of the measures of the French Revolution, and you know how much the present ones of Naples, Piedmont, and Spain, are identified with that."

"So much the worse," interrupted I, for he was inclined to continue—"So much the worse for it and them; as its atrocities are thus brought in full contrast with their splendid moderation, at once blasting it by comparison, and degrading them by contact. Excuse me," said I, for he was about to speak, "if I entreat you not to let us commence a political discussion. Your time must not be wasted, nor our good understanding endangered. I see to what your inquiries point.

You fear that, should we differ in opinion, my conduct towards the interesting object of your solicitude might be affected?"

He nodded assent.

"Make your mind easy on that head. Were I the most servile of the *Serviles** in my political creed, my private conduct would not be changed—and were yours the odious character that I have supposed possible for myself, I would still in this manner act towards you faithfully and cordially. But be quite convinced that in all that is essential we think alike. You love liberty and hate tyranny—so do I. You wish for triumph, great and lasting, to the liberal cause in Spain—my wishes and hopes are yours. And further let me add, that had I lived at the birthday of the French Revolution, I should have hailed it with the same enthusiasm with which I glorify the dawn that even now breaks over Spain;—but should *this*, in its progress, sink into the excesses which have eternized the infamy of *that*, I would execrate the one as I do the other. My ardent prayer is, that such may not be the result; and indeed the example of the past is the best guarantee for that which is to come. Let Spain march on in all the magnificence of her present progress; and should even overwhelming force throw her back again into the depths of darkness and disgrace, better lie so till the fitting hour of regeneration arrives, than gain a freedom defiled by crimes, whose brand sinks deeper than that of slavery itself,—a freedom which must disappear in rapid and loathsome extinction, as the gleams of putrescency expire in the rottenness by which they are engendered."

Such, or nearly such, were my words, and certainly such was the tenor of the reply which I made to my unknown catechist. It is not necessary to record his rejoinder, for it did not bear in any way on the course of events in which we were now parties. He almost immediately left me; and I soon heard him in deep converse with her who was, for the time being at least, his world.

CHAPTER XI.

Once more left to myself, my thoughts naturally reverted to the subject of this last interview. I entered on a train of reflection on the singular chances which had thus again brought into contact two men, not known to each other, even by name, yet between whom the very germ of a casual acquaintance, seemed at once to ripen into friendship; for I had no reason to doubt the stranger's sentiments towards me, and I could answer for the sincerity of those which he had excited. And thus, perhaps, it is that the best and most solid

*The epithet by which the Spanish Revolutionists designated the creatures of Absolutism.

attachments of life are, in their very formation, cemented and confirmed, by some secret sympathy which defies our research, and our ignorance of which makes us marvel at our own facility, and that of the object who so readily admits and returns our regard. And probably the philosophy of *practice* teaches that thus our friendships *should* be formed—by impulse, not on calculation—not bartering the best emotions of the heart for a speculative return—not *seeking* objects for our sympathy—not *choosing* them for qualities that may place them out of its range; but following the feeling that fixes our friendships as if by predestined doom—and letting our hearts imbibe the generous flow, like plants that instinctively open to the dew-shower which fills them with fruitfulness and bloom.

Let those who have gone out into the wide field of life on such a search as I have supposed, examine the result of the selections they may have made. Let them recollect the checks which have withered their budding hopes—the disappointments which have chilled their cultured expectations:—and then they will perhaps repose with fresh delight upon the few yet invaluable friendships which have sprung from chance meetings, and often forced their way through all the obstacles of opposing tastes, opinions, and pursuits. But I must not proceed so illogically as to anticipate the corollary of my argument, while the premises are yet unproved. Rather let me return to the subject of my story, and show how my connexion with its hero led to the digression I have too long indulged in.

I had, as my readers will allow, no small cause to be pleased with my own sagacity, in having conjectured the hut to be the haunt of some of the persons connected with the political intrigues known at that time to be in progress. This stranger had all but avowed himself to be involved in some such, and I did not hesitate in looking on him as a delegate from the discontented French, and the medium of communication between them, and the patriots of Spain. So far I was satisfied as to his political character; but my own opinions on public matters in no way influenced or interfered with the sentiments which led me to regard my new acquaintance as no common one. Accordance, or dissent, on points of this kind, happily interfere but seldom with individual attachments; for true liberality can draw the line between opinions and feelings, and thus separate the public from the private man.

But I was infinitely more at a loss when I attempted to account to myself for the embarrassment in which my new friend and his fair companion were involved. I hazarded several conjectures on the subject, which were all at variance with each other, and none satisfactory in itself; and I put an end to the fruitless intricacy of this guess-work, by a fervent prayer that, maid, wife, or widow, my heroine might get safely through her perils, and prove worthy of the guardianship that watched her.

All this while the night was passing over—rapidly enough, even for me, but how much faster for the couple with whom the hours were but as moments, yet every moment a long age of bliss—who neither counted the sands in the glass of Time, nor heard the flapping of his wings! The lovers were better employed. They were

making the most of the brief interval snatched from their difficulties, be they what they might; and I fancied the breaks in their murmured conversation to be filled up by those looks and sighs which speak a language more expressive, and more eloquent, than that of words.

The moment of separation at length arrived; it was within an hour of dawn, and the stranger left his mistress' chamber, and came to wish me a hasty farewell. Very few words passed between us. He was evidently affected by the parting which had just taken place—he had, like all lovers in like circumstances, out-staid his time—and he had little to say to me but the repetition of his hopes for my assistance, should it be required, and a renewed entreaty, that until I saw or heard from him I would not, in any circumstances, approach the secret chamber, nor interfere with its mysterious and interesting occupant.

I said just enough to satisfy, but not detain him. My lamp, which had been calculated for the actual duration of darkness, was growing rapidly dim, and promised not to outshine the stars. Its murky beam allowed just light enough to give my visiter a clear passage from my room into the one outside, and I saw him pause a moment at the opposite door, as if he gave so much breathing time to the firmness which he summoned to support his final parting. But a counter current was at hand to oppose the tide of resolution which he expected to set in. As he stopped thus for a while, with one hand pressed against his head, the other on his heart, the door opened, and the female whom I had seen the night before, less dimly even than than now, came gently from the room, and clasped his manly figure in her arms. The embrace was mutually firm and fervent. The sobs of the female were answered by soothing tones from her lover, and after a time she retired into the room again, he closing the door, and then girding a sword around him, and fixing a brace of pistols in his belt; he next flung a short cloak across his shoulders, placed a military looking travelling cap on his head, and crossing towards the fire-place was lost to my sight; and I soon heard the old woman rise from her bed and bolt the door, as this adventurous lover bent his way into the dreary paths, which were to lead to purposes and pursuits to me a mystery.

I lay down again, but scarcely expecting to sleep. Fatigued, however, by my previous indisposition and want of rest, I soon fell into a doze, from which I was awoken by the almost suffocating fumes of my expiring lamp, which I had forgot to extinguish, and which was now dying in any odour but that of sweetness or sanctity. I arose hastily, took down the piece of board, which acted the part of a shutter to my window, opened the casement, and put the lamp outside. It was not yet dawn; the air was not cold, for a mild night had succeeded to the bad and boisterous weather of the few preceding days. I felt relieved by the stream of freshness which seemed to flow into my confined and heated closet; and I no sooner returned to my lying position, than the influence of this new atmosphere procured me the sleep, which nature had before sought for in vain.

I slept as if I were never to awake again; an utter torpor seemed to have seized on me. I neither stirred from one posture, nor did a

dream ripple the surface of repose, in which my spirit seemed to be steeped. I awoke, however, but it was as if by force. I felt my mind struggling to get free from the sloth which clogged it, and the sense of hearing was the natural conductor through which my brain was acted on. As I gradually came into consciousness, it seemed as if enchantment surrounded me, and held me in its spell. A strain of wild and broken music, came now and then upon the breeze, distant at first, but repeated in louder strains, then dying away in lengthened vibrations, and again returning in short and varied sounds.

I sat up in my bed, and looked out of the open window. The mists had cleared away from over the ravine, and the rocky mountains at the other side, seemed to have approached the cottage by full one-half their apparanent distance the preceding day. The little hovel which served for a barrack to Sergeant Passepartout and his detachment, stood out in a bolder and nearer relief, and every object displayed the effect of the changeful atmosphere of this elevated region. I arose in momentary doubt of all that I saw and heard, for it seemed as if fancy was playing one of its deceptive freaks, and that I still slept. But sight and hearing repeated their evidences of reality. As I stretched out of my window and looked abroad, all the desolate features of the scene appeared in only a closer monotony; and I heard in louder sounds the repetition of the music, which I now knew to be bugle blasts, sent back in mimic melody from the hills.

I at first supposed them to proceed from the station occupied by my friend the sergeant, but I soon ascertained them to come from another and more distant quarter; and I distinctly saw Passepartout and his ten men, without any instrument of martial music, drawn up as if on parade, with all their arms and accoutrements in full marching order. I hastily threw on the remainder of my dress, and passed through the window out into the garden, from the farther extremity of which, a clear view was to be obtained, not only of the ravine, but of all the surrounding space. To my great surprise, I distinguished upon all the little paths leading down the hills in the direction of Gedro, a number of men scattered in small groups or coming singly along. These I at once discovered to be Spaniards, and a little while confirmed my supposition that they formed a portion of the army of the Faith, having united their straggling bands, and being about to re-enter Spain, by the unfrequented, and as it appeared, unguarded pass which lay before me.

There was infinite variety and animation in the scene I gazed on. The sun shone out brightly on the peaks, and the snow glistened in his rays. Lower down, the dark shadows of the rocks, or patches of pine wood, contrasted with the brightness above; and mixed in the sunshine and the shade, were the figures of the Spaniards, of whom I counted above a hundred, in their ragged yet romantic costume, all carrying muskets, pikes, or other weapons. Two or three bugles sounded at intervals, calling in the stragglers to the grand point of reunion, and frequently new objects were seen peering forth from the scanty covers of copse or furze, through which they forced a way, to fall in with the more beaten track.

A party had already halted at the opening of the gorge, in which the

hut was situated, and just where the noisy waterfall deposited its frothy waves in a basin, from which they flowed in limpid and silent streams into the valley. That seemed to be the rallying point for the assembling Spaniards, and it had all the air of head quarters to the strolling bands. Several mules were standing, heavily laden with baskets and bales of different dimensions; three or four tents were already pitched, and others were about to be constructed. These were all of rude materials, blankets, carpets and the like; and they formed a clumsy and mis-shapen parody upon a military encampment. A number of monks, women and children, sat or lay upon the ground, some apparently asleep, others eating, drinking, or occupying themselves about their scanty baggage.

On a rocky elevation about three or four hundred yards in advance of this encampment, but not so far from me, a group caught my attention. It consisted of six or seven persons, in better and more completely military attire than the rest, who surrounded and seemed earnestly to listen to the observations of one, who differed from them all in costume, and whose height also made him remarkable. This I ascertained to be Father Munoz, in the full habiliments of his order, who had, it appeared, succeeded in his plans for rallying some of his followers, and was now on the point of executing his daring and desperate project of hostilely recrossing the frontier. Much as I differed from this monk, in principles and opinions, I could not look without interest, upon so striking a specimen of fanatic fervour, bravery, and benevolence; a strange combination of powerful feelings, with high intellect; and forming a character, the most extraordinary with which I had ever come in contact.

The situation in which I now observed him, presented an aspect of peculiar power and variety. He evidently filled the part of military chief, and his functions seemed as various as they were uncongenial with his age and profession. He appeared to unite in himself all the duties of commander with those of adjutant and quarter-master general combined. At one time he reconnoitred with his spy-glass the distant heights, then he looked towards the baggage, and instantly one of the surrounding group hastened to the spot, where the bustle announced some movement, in obedience to the orders issued. Again he pointed towards particular points, leading to the pass through which his advance was to be attempted, and detachments of his little force quickly moved forwards, under the direction of some one from the party composing his personal staff. All this seemed effected by an active yet composed attention on his part, and a ready obedience in those who served his orders, indicative of a share of discipline that must have proceeded alone from the respect in which this holy chieftain was held.

A strong contrast to his zealous and ardent measures was presented in the lazy and luxurious air of his brother monks, who were reclined in indolent enjoyment, if it could be called so, partaking every thing but their trouble with the worn out and wretched women of the party; or some riding up to the rendezvous, while the females, more delicate, but not so weak, plodded on beside their mules, burdened and bowed down, by their young children, or large packages of clothes or provender.

Father Munoz having made all his preparatory arrangements for

his enterprize, with an apparent combination of boldness and caution, placed his advanced parties at their posts, and assigned to the whole their several stations and order of march; and next, to my great surprise and no little satisfaction, he quitted his party, and alone took the path which led up to the hut. I could not doubt his visit being meant for me, and I was grateful for this anticipated recollection of his patient, while I admired the good feeling that could, at a moment of such importance to himself and his devoted band, prompt a step which could alone, as I thought, have arisen from a pure sense of duty; and even when I found in a little time that other motives were mixed with that, it did not lessen my esteem.

The movement most natural to these feelings was to go forward to meet him, and I proceeded to put it in execution. I was about to return to my room, by the way I had come out, namely through the window, no door being visible to me, at the rear of the house. But in looking towards the window which belonged to the secret chamber, with a punctilious avoidance of a scrutiny that might see through it, I was struck by observing an object, which confirmed my whole mass of former suspicion and conjecture. This was no other than a small machine, evidently telegraphic, of a construction which I did not understand, but which was garnished with balls and ribbons of different colors, and was actually in busy motion, worked by hidden hands, and strings from the window, which my scrupulous regard to my promise, prevented my more closely examining. This political or amorous instrument, for the communication of facts or feelings, was close to the hut, but so low as not to overtop it, and so slender and small in all its proportions, as to be invisible from a very short distance, without the aid of a telescope—and such I had no doubt was steadily fixed upon it that moment, and perhaps upon me as well, thought I. I am not quite sure, whether or not this last notion had its effect in hastening my retreat, but I very quickly passed into my bed room, and through it into the kitchen. I was somewhat surprised to see it quite tenantless. There was no sign of any member of the family except the cat, which held its silent watch in the chimney corner, beside the unexpired embers of the night, and took no notice of my and Ranger's intrusion beyond the bristling line upon its back, which marked its rising choler—and which, I bore by many a more reasoning, but not less irrational being, would be in a state of perpetual elevation. Had it not been for the silent testimony of the little telegraph, I should have believed myself sole occupant of the hut, but although the Cagot proprietors had disappeared, I felt too anxious for the interests of her whom I believed to remain, to allow of my running any risk to her prejudice, by the admission of Father Munoz. I therefore quitted the house and walked down the path by which he was rapidly ascending.

I saluted him cordially, but with respect, taking off my hat, and addressing a few words of welcome, and thanks for the good advice, which had been so effectual in my recovery. He returned my salutation, as if his mind was fixed on other matters; and when he came close to me, he mechanically stretched out his hand, not to shake mine, but to feel my pulse. While his right hand was thus employ-

ed, his left held up his long sabre in its brass sheath, and also a crucifix, fixed to a wooden handle of about four or five feet long. A brace of huge horse pistols and a spy-glass were in his belt, which was also filled with rolls of paper stuck thickly into it. His cassock was tucked up all round, as high as his knees, and his long sinewy legs were thus displayed naked, but for the straps of his *spartilles*—and this, with the other parts of his dress before described, completed the marching and fighting costume of this singular chieftain.

When he had satisfied himself that my pulse was right, that is, supposing that he really thought about it at all, he dropped my hand abruptly, and said to me, looking all the while far above me, and into the distant peaks of the mountains, as I thought,

"Sir, I am glad you are well. I was desirous to see you, and have my hopes confirmed, as they now are. Nothing more is necessary, but to follow nature and trust in Heaven. And now let me fairly own to you that other motives beside my good wishes for you, urged my visit to this hut. In the first place, you have, I know, a gun, useless for awhile to you, but which, in other hands just now, might be of infinite assistance to the great cause of religion and loyalty, which I am in the act of serving. You understand me,"—continued he, pointing towards his encampment—"Will you lend me this valuable weapon, taking my good faith as security for its safe return, as soon as I have repassed our frontier line, and chastised the rebel bands that would interrupt my progress?"

"My good father and very worthy physician," answered I, "as your request is made with candour, I must refuse it without reserve. In the first place—opposed as I am to your attempt, however I may esteem your motives; anxious for your failure though I personally regard you; wishing well to your enemies, while they are individually unknown to me—I cannot voluntarily contribute, in ever so trifling a degree to your triumph and their defeat. In the next place——"

"Enough, enough," interrupted he, in his lofty tone, and on the same principle I suppose which induced Henry IV. of France to pass over the last eighteen reasons out of nineteen of the mayor of a town, who did not salute his approach with a discharge of artillery, the first being that he had no cannon—"Enough; I admire your frankness, and honor the fair dealing which marks your refusal: nor would I accept of your gun if your compliance had revolted your conscience."

"And besides," said I, wishing to soften the absolute rigor of my denial, "you have, it seems, no enemy to contend with, and your followers appear all well armed."

"Why," answered he calmly, "my followers are armed, but not well. They have their weapons returned to them from the neighboring French depot; but let that pass. And so you think that my enterprize is without difficulty, and that I shall not be opposed? Look yonder!"

With these words he arranged his spy-glass, gave it into my hand, and pointed to a distant part of the mountains that lay dark in the shade of Mout Perdu, which towered above all the others. I had

no sooner placed the glass to my eye, and levelled it in the direction he designed, than to my utter astonishment I discovered the face of the particular hill I looked at alive with men. My heart throbbed with pleasure, for I knew them at once to be the constitutional force of Spain.

Some sudden exclamation escaped me, and the monk observed,

"You see them, then?"

"I do, indeed," answered I; "and I advise you, my good father, to retract your steps into the safe shelter of France, nor venture beyond the bounds that will deliver you to the vengeance of yonder heroes."

"Their vengeance! seek shelter!" cried he with energy. "Rather let me hurry on to chastise the rebel crew, and drive them before this consecrated blade, which the most reverend and holy Francis Xavier* himself has blessed and bound around me.

With these words he drew out his blade, a real "toledo," of prodigious length, and of apparent corresponding sharpness of point and edge. He swung this formidable weapon over his head, held his crucifix like a standard, high in his other hand, and with his eyes staring forward towards the scene of approaching action, he stood a moment in this menacing, and I may say, appalling attitude. But I had not the least alarm. Had the ruffian Sanchez been so near, I dare say I should have felt very differently.

The monk recovered from his warlike reverie in a few minutes, and putting up his blade, he asked me if the family of the hut were all from home?

"The family are all, I do believe," answered I.

"Either you are mistaken," said he, "or some one besides the family is in the house this moment, I think."

As he said this, he looked through his glass towards the mountain. I made no immediate reply, but I began to feel seriously uneasy for the person whom I tolerably well *knew* to be in the house.

"Look once more," said he, "and steadily, at yonder point of rocky appearance, just under that long patch of snow."

I pointed the glass as desired, and in a very little my eye rested on a machine of precisely the same telegraphic appearance as that which was so near us. It appeared busily worked by the figure of a man, who stood close to it. I started with surprise.

"You are astonished!" said Father Munoz; "and I am convinced that those signals communicate with the Cagot's hut."

"Why should you think so?" asked I, in a manner that must have looked very like complicity on my part.

"In the first place," replied he, "because I can no where else discover or indeed imagine a return of this kind of communication; and in the second, because I know that the family are in actual understanding with yonder odious enemy. What! you are incredulous again? Take the glass once more, and look firmly on that little rugged path, leading up from that gorge to the left, and tell me if you recognize an acquaintance."

Again I put this magic glass to my eye, and although expecting some

*The prelate alluded to was, I suppose, Francis Xavier Miery Campillo bishop of Almeida, and Inquisitor General.

new wonder, I was indeed surprised to mark the bent yet active form of the old Cagot woman, trudging up the path, in direct course for the Liberal army, not far out of her reach.

"Your glass has indeed taught me something new, for all these matters were to me most perfect secrets," said I.

"I believe it," replied he; "and you will not be now surprised if I should wish to examine that hat."

"Not surprised at your wish, but most unwilling that you should put it into force. I consider myself in some measure the guardian of the house, and all it contains, however unknown to me. I cannot consent to have it examined, but I cannot prevent your entering it by force."

"By force!" exclaimed Father Munoz, "No, not even if I had the right. But we are on French ground, and the right is not mine; so, be satisfied as to the safety of all that is there, whether friends of yours, or our foes. And now I must hasten to my duty, strong in confidence, and confident in faith. Adieu, Sir; and that you may know fully the principles which are my impulse and my support, read this."

He then gave me from his belt a printed paper; and while I read as follows, he wended his way down the path which led him to his post.

*"Proclamation.**

"SOLDIERS AND CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST.

"By the aid of the Lord, you are about to gain a glory equal to that which your forefathers acquired over the impious Moors. The bells of the temple of God have called forth your valour and your love for our holy religion. Ye have taken up arms, and Heaven will favor and forward your undertakings. Ye are about to begin your glorious task of exterminating the troops of the line, militia, and constitutionalists. Continue firm and zealous in your object, and you are more than a match for these perverse and odious wretches. You will imitate your ancestors, who raised the cross on the Spanish soil, in sign of the total destruction of the Moorish race. A new sect, far worse than the infidels of old, now trample in ruins the sacred temple of the only true faith. If you wish indeed to gain the road to heaven, follow me to victory; and look on the standard of the crucifix which I bear before you, as the basement and guide of your actions upon earth, and of your eternal salvation.

"Sacrifices are dear to the Lord! Christians, I place myself at your head, and together we shall triumph! I lead you on the path to victory; and our enemies, who are the foes of religion and of Christ, shall perish to a man. Let us swear before heaven, and in presence of the image of God, not to lay down our arms before they be exterminated—the philosophers, the troops of the line, and the militia, one and all!

"Let us cry aloud, and with one voice, and in the name of our Redeemer, Long live the Faith! long live our absolute King!—and, for the safety and the glory of these, blood and flames to every Constitutionalist!

"Munzo, the General."

*This is a literal translation.

CHAPTER XII.

While I read this very characteristic specimen of Christianity as *practised*, and reflected what it ought to be as *professed*, following the laudable example of my betters, by letting my commentary far exceed the text in length and obscurity, the reverend and pugnacious author had joined his disciples; and the bugles sounded to arms, the bustle of preparation became general. The fighting men sprang from the earth with alacrity; the women busily commenced to repack and arrange the baggage, strike the tents, and load the mules; while even the ecclesiastical incumbrances showed some signs of activity, as if aroused from their torpor by the inspiration of the scene.

When a pause in the bugle sounds allowed me distinctly to hear the hundred echoes, in which they beautifully died away, a sharper, but not less harmonious strain came from the mountain, distant and faint at first, but swelling as each loud-mouthed cavern caught the tones and sent them downwards. I then knew the spirit-stirring trumpet-blasts, and, as they vibrated around, I seemed to inhale the very breath of the freedom they proclaimed. The bugles from below loudly answered the defying notes. The trumpet again, and more fiercely than before, replied. Blast succeeded to blast, and echo angrily mocked echo, as if the strained throats of the mortal musicians had given sensation as well as sound to animate the voices of the hills.

During the continuance of this fierce concert, the monk had addressed, and read to his assembled followers, the to them inspiring, but, in my view, the impious proclamation. I could not hear his single voice amidst the clangour of loud sounds, but I clearly saw his violent gestures, at every passage of his extempore speech, or printed production, which demanded particular emphasis. He proved himself in this instance as eloquent as he was zealous and brave, for no sooner had he finished his harangue than the collected crowd bore testimony to its effect. The monk raised his sword and crucifix on high, and gave a signal shout, which was joined by full two hundred voices, each vying with the rest in force. Prolonged and repeated yells sent the signals of fanatic zeal into the narrowest and deepest recesses of the mountains, and every rock returned the salute in reverberations that reached the skies. The descending bands of the patriots, now becoming visible in every pass, caught the dying tones, and flung their hoarse shouts upon the vibrating circles of the air, till all the atmosphere seemed filled with sounds, as if thousands of aerial sprites were mocking this discordant, yet animating chorus.

I could scarcely calculate the time passed in these preparatory sounds, which formed an appalling overture to the deadly drama about to be acted. I felt myself so worked upon by the wild and impressive scene, and so interested in the coming contest, that had I

been personally involved in its results, I could not have been more alive to the transactions which were passing, or more heedless of the time they consumed.

As the invading party moved steadily upwards to gain the Spanish ground, the patriot defenders of the soil poured down and took up their position, at a few hundred yards distance from the French line of demarcation. Sergeant Passepartout, and his ten soldiers stood firmly at their post, their regular position only slightly and occasionally disturbed by an impatient attitude or disapproving gesture at some movement of one of the hostile parties.

During this opening of the enterprize I kept near to the hut, following the movements of the opposing parties, with my anxious glances, but turning them frequently towards the window of the secret chamber, in expectation of seeing a female form appear; and as I intently listened to catch the report of the first hostile musket my ear involuntarily turned towards her, whose possible call for assistance I held myself ready to attend. But as the champions of the Faith advanced with apparent resolution, gallantly led on by Father Munoz, and clearly opposed to an enemy double their number, I could not help feeling for some minutes that interest in the fortunes of *the few*, so natural even when one considers them as foes; and I went mechanically down the rugged side of the ravine, my gun in hand, following their line of march. I was really startled, after a little time, at seeing my near contact with their rearward platoon, and I was brought to my senses by the shame of thus almost identifying myself with it, on hearing the following chorus to a kind of battle song, which the whole party simultaneously chanted, as Father Munoz, having passed the frontier line, struck his standard upon the earth, and sounded the key note of the martial air, to which the wretched words were adapted.

Murieron los Liberales,
Murio la Constitucion,
Perque viva el Rey Fernando
Con la Patria y Religion!

Let the Liberals die,
And their Code let it perish!
That the King, with the Faith,
And the Country may flourish.

Brought to my recollection by the besotted bigotry of this stanza, I stopped short and resumed my proper character of a distant observer of the scene. I sat upon a rock, which gave me an ample view of the hut, and allowed me to mark distinctly the progress of Father Munoz's band, the movements of the constitutionals, and the conduct of Sergeant Passepartout and his neutral party.

Father Munoz still led the van; but once within the Spanish territory, he turned round to his band, and quickened their advance by vigorous and inspiring gestures, which were repeated by those close to his person, and who formed his staff. The fighting men intrepidly moved on, and as they came up close to their commander, formed

in the order of battle which he traced. But nothing seemed to prove more completely the confidence of the whole, than the promptitude with which the remainder of the party, monks on their mules, women and children on foot, followed the warriors, not resting on the safe protection of French territory for the result of the day, but closely joining themselves to the chances of the coming fight. This was, however, not caused alone by their certainty of success, although that was unbounded, but by the advantage taken of it by their skilful leader, for he knew that the generous enemy would rather suffer his advance to the most advantageous ground for his inferior numbers, than oppose it at the risk of injury to the helpless followers, thus apparently but not actually exposed.

The ground on which the champions of the Faith were deploying was a plain of small extent, rugged, certainly, for their movements, but smooth in comparison with the rocks and ravines which were around it. It ran along the side of the mountain to the eastward, and lost itself in a gorge of deep and dark appearance. This plan seemed the last accessible pasture ground on our side of the mountain, for the abrupt elevation which bounded it, forbade the ascent of any animals but the wild goat in search of safety from his pursuers, or the men whose love for liberty made them struggle now through its rude obstructions.

The force of the Constitutionals must have been full five hundred men, but more than half that number, as soon as the exact amount of their enemies was visible, were seen to retreat from the advanced position retained by the rest, and they retired along the narrow pass which was about to be contested, until they disappeared from the scene of approaching action. This was evidently done by the patriot chieftain from a chivalric feeling, founded, perhaps, on contempt for his foe : but he ranged and stationed his remaining men with great care, in the heights at each side of the pass, and in a position which, if defended with courage, appeared to me impregnable.

This chief was, with others about him, at first seen on horseback, and the skill and safety with which they managed their small and active steeds, was almost miraculous, and seemed to excuse the exaggeration of the country people, who, vaunting the feats of Mina's cavalry, reported them to gallop on the most pointed peaks of the rocks. The person in chief command on the present occasion, was full as conspicuous as was Father Munoz in his important post ; and soon dismounting from his horse, he put himself on a personal equality with his rival. The generals seemed to vie with each other in vigor and activity, and I cannot describe the feeling with which I thought that the patriot chief might be Mina himself, or my intense curiosity to obtain exact information on that point. Passepartout and his men remained with steadiness on their own ground. The sergeant proved himself on this day a veteran ; and the young raw conscripts under his command, caught the inspiration of his disciplined demeanor, and kept coolly observant of events, the novel and exciting nature of which must have been a trial to their inexperienced nerves.

When Father Munoz and his fighting fanatics had reached the foot of the rude heights where the patriots were posted (the monks and

women having halted on the plain,) a short pause was made. Each man seemed to breathe awhile for fresh energy, to encounter the danger thus so well envisaged by the whole. It was indeed a formidable sight. The patriots seemed in their position quite invulnerable. They were individually niched in the rocky recesses, from which they had the power of picking out their assailants, and sacrificing them one by one, while collectively they might defy the utmost efforts of their foes. Still the latter showed no dastard hanging back; and when, at their general's command, the bugle at last sounded the signal for firing, a discharge took place, not in regular volley, but in the independent way, called by us "hedge firing," such as is practised for a *feu-de-joie*, every man selecting his object, and firing at discretion. I marked the flashes of this first discharge, heard the sudden and faint concussion of the sounds, which fell flattened, as it were, against the rocks; then followed the progress of the concentrated clouds sent up from every musket, and as they at first enveloped, but with gradual dispersion, soon showed the patriots again, I watched anxiously for the return of the deadly salute, as the echoes caught its report, and sent it in distant and irregular repetitions from crag to crag.

But not a shot was returned by the patriots, who stood firmly in their position; nor could I distinguish that they were diminished by one man. Father Munoz's bugle sounded "cease firing," and a momentary silence ensued. He seemed to wait the enemy's fire, but it came not, and there was something inexpressibly awful in the fixed and expectant attitudes of the assailants, waiting for the death they braved, and the statue-like aspect of their enemies, each standing immovably on his rocky pedestal, and not deigning to notice the assault so fiercely given and so unflinchingly received.

Whatever might be Father Munoz's feelings, he was determined that those of his followers should not flag. He once more raised his crucifix on high, and taking off his hat, he waved it round his head, and uttered just such a shout as had before burst from him. Its effect was, as then, electrical. Every throat of his band was opened out, and a long and loud huzza burst spontaneously from all; its echoes died far away, and then came down from the mountain-side a harsh and general screech of *laughter*, that seemed vollied from the bitterest depths of contempt. The unwearied echoes caught the tones, and in their insensible yet living mimicry, they prolonged them from hill to hill, blending with each other the loudest with the feeblest repetitions, in a way so wild and thrilling, as to give an air of fiendish mockery to the whole. My blood felt frozen, and every nerve cramped up, as I breathlessly gazed on the immovable men from whom such strange and demon sounds proceeded.

The fanatics, if as much shocked, were much more moved than I; for after giving an instant to the rising of their indignant desperation, it burst forth in a torrent of vigorous and varied development. Father Munoz, as usual, gave the signal for this out-bursting. He jumped with furious gestures, stamped, and raved. The whole force of his followers was instantly displayed in the like antics—the women

screamed, tore their hair, and danced in frantic ecstasy—and even the lazy monks clapped their hands, thumped their breasts, and uttered loud and impious execrations.

But the insulted warriors did not rest contented with these tokens of rage. Their destiny led them forward to a more ruinous demonstration. They rushed one and all against the rocky bulwarks before them, and with straining efforts clambered over every obstacle to their destruction. It was their day of doom! No sooner was the whole body of their force fairly entangled in the rocks than a loud shout from above, which seemed to speak both vengeance and victory, was the signal for a shower of ponderous rocks, torn from the earth, and hurled with a deadly accuracy of aim. Nothing could be more terrible than the simultaneous discharge of these savage missiles. The huge blocks of granite, shoved from their resting places, at first rolled slowly down, like animals coiling up their energies for the fierce speed they were about to put forth. Some went on gradually for a time, on the smooth slopes which here and there smiled greenly among the grey and desolate heaps of granite. Others at once bounded off from crag to crag, but a very short space, and a period almost imperceptible, intervened between the desperate setting out of these solid bodies and their rapid crash into thousands of fragments, every one an instrument of death. The view of this silent shower of fate was almost momentary, but it was harrowing. The wretched victims of its coming effects looked towards it—shrieks of terror broke from some, as they flung themselves upon the earth, to be mangled and crushed without an effort—others held up their arms as if such feeble intervention might avert their fate—others more collected shrunk safely down behind projecting rocks—and a few from their stony ambuscades took steady aim, and returned from their muskets unerring answers to the deadly salutation thus sent down.

Three or four of the patriots were hit and fell. Full a fourth of the fanatics were struck to the earth. My eye involuntarily fixed on Father Munoz, and the group which stood, like him, braving what the bravest might have shrunk from. Several received the bruising or deep-cutting splinters, but the general stood unharmed. He urged on his men with unabated vigour, and such as had survived the shock, and were not disabled, prepared for an attempt to force the heights. The partial execution done by the last discharge gave encouragement to their marksmen, and revenge for their killed or maimed companions enforced the example set by their daring chief. But they fought against impossibilities and without a chance of success. The patriots, having exhausted their prepared store of rocky missiles, now took their fire-arms into use, and their impetuosity for close combat being not to be restrained, they abandoned their position, and hurried down to meet their foes.

A more desperate conflict then commenced, and bayonets, pikes, and swords, were soon brought into action, as individual exertion and bodily force more particularly characterized the fight. I observed many instances of great bravery in the single combats into which the contest was now divided, but the result was never for a moment

doubtful. The patriots on all sides drove their opponents down, and a retreat from their temporary advance was soon general among the fanatics. Father Munoz made almost incredible efforts to rally and reassure his men. If he gave up a foot of ground, it was only in exertion to restrain the flight, now becoming general. He seemed to seek danger wherever it was thickest, and from him alone the patriot warriors shrunk. At first I thought this was caused by fear of his prowess, but I soon perceived it to proceed from respect for his profession. No man would fight him hand to hand; and though several of his immediate followers were wounded, and two or three fell dead beside him, I could see that no musket was levelled at his person. Several chance balls, however, as I afterwards ascertained, pierced his hat and the flowing drapery of his robe; and the brass scabbard of his sabre was contused in more than one place. He certainly escaped enough of risks on this day to strengthen his disciples' belief that he bore "a charmed life."

During the continuance of this sanguinary scene, the women of "the Faith," and the assistant monks, prayed, wept, and screamed by turns. Perceiving at length that the day was lost, they fell back with their frail possessions upon the French territory. They were soon followed by many of the discomfited and disabled combatants—but Father Munoz maintained his ground, shifting from rock to rock as each spot appeared susceptible of defence, or while any aid was left to his exertions.

During the whole affair, the commander of the patriot force was distinguishable not more by his valor than his surprising activity. He bounded from place to place wherever an enemy was to be opposed or a friend assisted. On several occasions he joined in personal combat with two or more of the enemy, and his victory seemed half achieved before he struck a blow. He was the mark for many well directed shots. I several times observed the ground ploughed up by bullets close at his feet, or splinters struck from rocks beside him or above his head. He was once wounded, but slightly it appeared, for he merely tore his handkerchief from his neck and bound it round his arm; and instantly levelling his pistol, fired at the brawny fellow by whom he had been hit. He had a sure revenge, for the fellow, shot through the heart or head, I could not at that distance distinguish which, sprang high from the crag where he had stood—the certain movement following a wound in either of the vital parts—and, dropping dead, he rolled down from rock to rock in frightful succession, his limbs and carcass almost visibly dislocated and defaced, as he hung dangling for a moment on a jagged point, and then was dashed upon some lower projection. I could not resist the hope which flashed upon me that this might be the ruffian Sanchez, or at least that he had fallen, for whenever he came across my mind a presentiment of ill seemed coupled with the recollection.

As the retreating fanatics came again across the frontier line into France, they were severally disarmed by Sergeant Passepartout and his men, and I thought I could distinguish in their abruptness the contemptuous dislike which even the partial bravery of the vanquished was not sufficient to entirely remove. As soon as they had given

up their arms, these outcasts, thus promptly disbanded, disposed of themselves with all the vagabond recklessness which I had observed at my first meeting with them. A few stood, sul'ently watching the fruitless struggle of their gallant chief, who called on them in vain. Others, most of them wounded, joined the monks and women, who wept and wailed loudly as they applied rude remedies, and stanchcd, or bound up their hurts. A few fled up the gorges of the hills, apparently ashamed of their too easy defeat; and I was only withheld from inquiring of them the name of the patriot chief, by the fear of insulting and irritating their already goaded feelings. Some lay down in the ravine by the side of the rivulet, as it would seem, to die. Not one came near the hut; and my surprise at their avoiding this shelter where they might have expected aid, was not removed till I afterwards learned that Father Munoz had most peremptorily commanded his troops to hold the hut inviolate—and he was thus implicitly obeyed, even in defeat and ruin.

As the fugitives came toward me I could plainly distinguish their features, and I recognized several of those who had been my fellow lodgers two days before at Gedro. I could have well enough occupied myself in reading the varieties of character displayed in the different expression of their countenances, from indignant rage to hardened indifference, had not my attention been particularly fixed on one, whom I instantly knew to be Sanchez. A creeping sensation, such as some people feel at the sight of particular reptiles, seemed to curdle through my veins as I gazed on this object of my abhorrence. I saw him lie down behind a rock, which intervened between him and the foes he ran from as well as the friends he had forsaken, but which allowed me an ample view of his figure, every movement of which was now familiar to me.

I had frequently during the last two or three eventful hours, forced my eyes from the scene on which they appeared rivetted, to look round at the house I was so well inclined, but so little able to protect, had injury been attempted. But at each glance, while no danger really existed, I could see no object on which hostility might be practiced. Now, however, when this desperate and already detected ruffian, overflowing no doubt with venom, and projecting revenge, came within reach of harm to the hut and its one inhabitant, I saw, as I turned my watchful gaze abruptly round, the girl of the house, in her usual dress, standing in the garden, and close to the little telegraph, which she grasped with one hand, while with the other she waved a silken flag, in animating gestures of victory and welcome.

Where has she been? How has she come here? Was she with her mother on the mission to the patriots? Did she remain in the secret chamber? And where is the mysterious female? All these were the quick and self-put questions of my brain, which came in a simultaneous and unanswered rush. My eye then turned with inquiring rapidity across the ravine towards which the signal flag was waved. There I saw a scene of incomplete and perplexing information—but giving, with a startling discovery, a promise of an instant and ample denouement.

The last of the defeated fanatics—and that I need hardly say, was

no other than Father Munoz,—was disarmed, and had repassed the frontier. He was deprived of his sabre and pistols—and he slowly retired—his crucifix held to his breast—his hands clasped together—his head down. The patriots were collected in an irregular group, forming a broken crescent, in about the centre of which stood their victorious leader, with the other officers, who had supported him so well. The trumpets blew a flourish; a thrice repeated shout drowned the exulting notes; and their long huzzas and *vivas* proclaimed the hero's fame, to all who listened. "Long live Don Melchior!" "Long live De Trevazos!" "Long live the Avenger!" were the enthusiastic tribute to the conqueror's praise—and to me the proud announcement of the hero I had already welcomed as my friend. For as he gracefully removed his plumed cap and displayed his ardent and animated countenance, I could not be mistaken, and I learned the truth, which, I dare say, my readers need not now be told, that it was no other than the stranger visiter of the preceding night, who now stood displayed in all the pride and glory of success.

"My quick-glancing gaze flew back in search of *her*, who should, I thought, have been the first to hail, and hallow by her presence, the triumph of the scene. My eye only rested on the Cagot costume of the girl, waving her flag, and hurrying down the rugged path. And when again I turned my looks to meet the hero, they caught the intercepting form of the crouched ruffian, who looked up towards the scene round a projecting elbow of the rock, by which he was reclined. I marked the impatient acknowledgements of Don Melchoir, as he bowed his thanks to his gallant hand. But placing one hand to his heart, he pointed the other towards the hill where I stood, and he followed the direction thus given to his soldiers' observation, with a quick and active step, attended only for a few paces by Sergeant Passepartout, to whom he delivered his sword and pistols, and who seemed, as he accepted them, to apologize to the gallant owner of the weapons he deserved so well to wear.

I could not restrain the movement of joy, which made me struggle over the rude obstacles that kept me from the ravine. My eye never quitted Don Melchior for one moment, and it was not till I saw him pass by the rock where Sanchez lay concealed, that a pang of apprehension for his safety flashed fiercely across my brain. I stood for an instant arrested on the spot—and it was in vain that I recovered myself and stirred, as I saw the crouching villain rise and follow, with bent body and long strides, the victim he had too surely marked.

Don Melchior came quickly on with light and unsuspecting step, and the firm yet cautious tread of the murderer fell unheard behind him, on the mossy slope he traversed. The moment I perceived his perilous situation, I shouted with all my might, at once to warn him and scare the assassin; but he looked up towards me, and returned the shout with a joyous expression, for the welcome he supposed it to convey; and the unruffled assassin only raised his arm the higher, that the blade it wielded might more steadily fall upon his destined prey.

Joined to my shout, a piercing scream burst from the path close to my side, and the hood of the *Cagot girl* hung floating from behind that beauteous head, whose thick curled ringlets I could not fail to recog-

nise, as a light form bounded past me. Don Melchior stood for a moment transfixed in surprise, at the sounds of alarm, and at the same instant Passepartout and his men, catching the figures of the hero and his assassin, which the rock had till then concealed, joined in the loud and terrified signal which I and the frantic girl had raised. Don Melchior, startled and perplexed, just turned his head half round, when Sanchez, with one fierce exclamation, "We have met!" plunged his murderous knife with a downward slope, into the hero's side. Don Melchior tottered from him, and was falling—when I, with an instinctive effort, raised my gun to my shoulder, and having covered the villain, was in the act of putting my finger to the trigger, when a flash from Sergeant Passepartout's carbine arrested the movement, and before the report reached my ear, the coward lay writhing on the earth in the agonies of an immediate and far too easy death.

How often in the course of this recital have I wished that my pen could fly across the page, and trace, in words of flaming speed, thoughts and events as rapid and as hot as the lightning. But now I seem to wish a long and lingering pause: for how to describe the accumulated burst of feelings which followed the assassin's stroke! "To fall *thus*!" was, I believe, the bitter thought that struck all those who saw and who could think. The gallant comrades of his glory, the astonished and delighted witnesses of his courage, his own troops, Passepartout and his soldiers, and myself, all saw and felt no doubt alike. But there was one among us yet who felt herself at that moment as alone in life, and whose heart appeared to be pierced by the stroke so steadily aimed at her lover's. She had force to fly to the spot, such force as makes the body writhe when severed from existence. She reached her lover, wild, screaming, and exhausted. He had fallen to the ground, and with out-stretched arms he received the beauteous form which sunk upon his, to staunch with senseless weight his wide and gushing wound. I was in a moment one of the group that surrounded this pair, of whom we could scarcely imagine which was the nearer to death.

The mixed feelings of grief, astonishment, and horror, agitated every bystander around me, but in addition to these I had to suffer that wild and still incredulous conviction that made me certain of the fact discovered to me, but doubtful of my own intellect.

The female before me was, I saw it, *the Cagot girl*. Her dress, her height, her whole appearance left no possibility of doubt, but her form of symmetry, her face of beauty, how could these be there? and when, with a convulsive spasm, she tore open the firm-clasped capulet, and exposed her neck and heaving bosom, what was my amazement to see, instead of the gross deformity I had in fancy loathed, perfection that might invite a sculptor's hand, and make his heart thrill as he gazed.

I hastily threw her cloak and hood over this rich field of beauty, which I felt to be already violated by the rude, yet admiring stare of the astonished observers.

CHAPTER XIII.

For several minutes the bodies lay untouched and motionless. An attempt to clasp his unconscious mistress in his arms was instantly followed by a fainting fit, which rendered the fallen hero as insensible as she. The blood gushed freely from his wound, and covered her profusely, and had it not been for this streaming evidence of life, their pallid faces and fixed forms might have seemed silently to claim the shelter of a grave.

A stupifying cloud appeared to hang over us who stood by. The spectacle before us would at any time, even by a train of preparation, have been enough to have produced a bewildering inaction, but the violence of the shock from triumph to despair, the sudden wrenching of the joy which seemed rooted in all hearts—this was too much for even manhood to sustain, and a group of powerless observers was the result.

I believe I was one of the first who shook off this lethargy, and I was aroused only by the impetuous grief of one of Don Melchior's soldiers, who, coming with others to the spot, would have rushed towards the body of his adored commander, to strain it in his arms. This abruptness shocked me. I feared that the life blood would have ebbed away in the violent movement of the body; and, as I interposed between it and the distracted soldier, Father Munoz's figure caught my eye, as he was in the very act of dressing one of his wounded followers, not a hundred yards from me. Salvation seemed within my glance. I pushed my way right through the crowd around me; and just as I cleared the lane of men, and stepped out into the open space, my foot actually touched, and had nearly fallen upon the outstretched corpse of the atrocious Sanchez. I shrank back with a spasm of disgust. The wretch betrayed in death what he might have, when living, succeeded to conceal. His face was bare, and his upturned eyes, and the curl upon his lip, spoke volumes of malignity and baseness. A thick black stream flowed from his temple, where the bullet had entered, and added to the ghastly expression of his colorless cheek. I sprang across the corpse, and was in a few moments close to Father Munoz.

He looked at me, and seeing the evident expression of distress which prompted my breathless entreaty that he would accompany me, he paused for a moment, and laid down the half bandaged leg of the sufferer he was relieving.

"What is the nature of the wound?" asked he.

"A desperate thrust of a knife," cried I, "close to the heart, if Heaven has kept that unhurt."

"A knife! *that* cannot wait, *this* may," returned he, with animation, and adding a word or two of comfort to his patient, he hurried with me along the track I had just left behind. He did not ask me whom I had summoned him to attend. In his evident anxiety to afford aid, he not only omitted to inquire whether it was officer, or

private or friend or foe ; but he also seemed to forget the defeat and disgrace under which he himself labored, proving the nobleness of his nature, by the triumph of genuine benevolence over the most powerful prejudices and passions of the mind.

I had seen enough of this extraordinary man, to be convinced that the rank of my friend would in nothing influence his attentions. But I was not sure of the effect which a knowledge of his opinions might produce ; and I trembled at the risk I was about to run in naming at once the wounded man. I felt it, however, but just to do so towards *him*, in order that I might be enabled to combat the repugnance which was naturally to be excited in the priest ; and towards the priest himself, as a matter of delicacy, not to surprise his still festering feelings, by the too abrupt view of his late successful rivals.

There was not a moment to lose.

"Father Munoz," said I, "I have not at such a time stood on points of form. I have ventured to put you to a severe trial. The man whom you are about to see, but whom I fear you cannot save, is no other than Don Melchior de Trevazos."

"What! Don Melchoir! God be praised!" ejaculated he ; and my heart sunk with disappointed grief to hear the expression, and in dread of the refusal of assistance which I expected to follow it.

"God be praised!" reiterated the monk ; "you said he still lived?"

"I fear to ask the question now," said I, "but he was not dead when I left the spot."

"Then I may be in time to save him—or, at least, to breathe the words of holy truth into his ear, and give comfort to his parting spirit ; let us hasten to him!"

These reassuring words were scarcely finished, when we reached the place where the wailing Spaniards, with Sergeant Passepartout and his men, stood closely encircling the still senseless bodies of Don Melchoir and Malvide. At sight of the monk, his patriot fellow countrymen made way for him one and all, with every demonstration of respect, inspired by his triple character of general, priest, and doctor. When he reached the centre of the circle, and saw the afflicting spectacle, he started with a movement which seemed the combined effect of astonishment and horror. All the austere collectiveness of his nature was overpowered by the scene ; and to the amazement of myself and the other spectators, the rigid priest, the stoical physician, and the intrepid warrior, threw himself upon his knees, bent low over the bodies, and giving a full vent to his feelings, which were a mystery to all around him, he burst into a passionate flood of tears. He made no effected efforts to conceal his emotion, but for some moments sobbed aloud in speechless anguish. His recovery from this gush of feeling was as instantaneous as had been the attack. He started up quickly, and with a bitter and self-reproaching tone, exclaimed, "Good God what am I about!—while he is dying—and *she*! Heaven forgive this last and worst exposure of criminal anguish!"

With the utmost promptness and self-command, he commenced the operations of his surgical skill, anxiety of the deepest kind mark-

ed his countenance, where the violent traces of some fierce conflict of passions were stamping their deep but fugitive imprint. It seemed as if his mind was separated into distinct parts—all the faculties of judgment and exertion bearing on the immediate objects of his care, while the wild emotions of personal feeling swept like a hurricane through his brain. So, at least, I read the convulsed expression of his face and frame, and the sequel will prove that I read rightly.

Father Munoz had, in the first instance, to give a divided attention to the senseless pair before him—but he gave it as though he felt them to be as one. He promptly but steadily seized Don Melchoir's wrist, and felt his scarcely beating breast. Almost at the same instant, he took Malvide's fair hand in his, and I plainly distinguished the trembling of his arm while he counted the faint pulsation of hers. Without inquiries from those around him as to the cause of what he saw, he appeared to read what had passed in the evidence before him, and he applied himself without hesitation to give aid where assistance was most important.

I cannot pretend to recollect the means of relief which he applied to Don Melchoir. What styptics he employed, or how he treated the wound, are points of little importance to the reader, and were not, even at the moment, attended to by me. It was enough for me to observe, the various accessories to Father Munoz's skill were contained in the well filled cavities of his leathern girdle, which held besides, his prayer-book, and the thick folds of his proclamation, some instruments of surgery, with two or three phials and rolls of lint, plaster, and bandage. From this assortment he chose whatever he thought most suited to the case; and such was my confidence in his skill and integrity, that I felt neither apprehension as to the first, nor doubt of the latter. In his hands I considered Don Melchoir as near to a chance of safety, as was consistent with his apparently desperate state. My immediate observation turned therefore to the other object, which so irresistably shared without weakening the deep interest excited for the unfortunate chieftain.

Scarcely had the monk's still sensitive fingers loosed their hold of Malvide's arm, when she, like some instrument in which vibration had been awakened by the touch, gave signs of returning animation. A shivering movement told that the nerves were newly strung; and the dawn of reviving nature broke, in a streaky flush, upon her pallid cheek. Her quivering lip and trembling lid, rising once, as if to take in air and light, showed the instinctive struggle of mortality to cling to life; and the awakening of the mind was almost instantly perceptible, in the sudden opening of eyes and mouth, the distension of nostril—that membrane, as eloquent as either feature—the incredulous stare, as memory told what had passed—the hand pressed against the brow to feel if sense were there—the abrupt start, while reason's fully risen orb, flashed its maddening beam upon her. Recollecting the fullness of her misery, she turned her looks upon her lover, and withheld from flinging herself upon his bleeding body, by the dread of interrupting the monk's benevolent care, her emotion burst forth in one of those suppressed and suffocating screams,

so terrific to the hearer, and which seemed to rend the utterer's heart.

Her countenance was a picture of inexpressible agony, as her glance fell alternately upon Don Melchior, and her own dress, which was covered with his blood. She knelt and wrung her hands. She did not speak, as if the fear of agitating him overpowered the natural wish, at such a time, to let her heart overflow in words. But her lips quivered convulsively; her eyes were raised, at times, and they, for an instant, closed; and she, more than once, seized her blood-stained capulet, and hugged it with frantic energy, as though she thus enfolded to her breast all of him which she dared venture to embrace.

It was not certainly a fitting moment for a critical examination of the interesting girl; and even now I wonder at the strange perversity of feeling which prompted me to enter upon such a task. But such was the combined effect of admiration, pity, and surprise, that I forgot for awhile every more important consideration, and I began to observe the object that should have inspired them with as minute a scrutiny as one exercises in a ball-room, or on a race-course. I could scarcely believe my eyes—those perjured evidences, which so lately told me that this heroine of mine was lame and loathsome, and which now testified to her surpassing grace and beauty. She was, indeed, most beautiful; and her anguished movements showed sorrow in such subdued and natural grace, as might have put joy's fantastic antics to the blush.

There are various kinds of female beauty, as all the world allows; and each in its turn considered the most lovely. The rich bloom of health, the pallid tint of grief, the azure or the hazel eye, curls of light brown, or ringlets of deep jet—which is admired the most, or which is the most to be admired? While each makes the assortment that he fancies best, I may, perhaps, be suffered to express my notion on a point which ever has held, and ever will hold, mankind in a state of most lucky disagreement.

To my mind, *variety* in the face of a lovely woman, as in that of nature's self, is the greatest possible charm. To suppose loveliness in a woman, is to admit that her features, skin, and hair are all *good*. But these are individually unimportant points; for it signifies little whether a complexion be white or brown, a nose Roman or Grecian, and eye black or blue. Neither is it by those faces where all may be called in *keeping*, that we are most pleased. If we are told that a woman is beautiful and *fair*, we expect to see light eyes, light air, brilliant skin, and rosy cheeks. If a *brunette* is announced, dark locks, dark eyes, and dark complexion, spontaneously associated themselves in our minds. We see each object agreeing with, or even surpassing our expectation; we mark and marvel at the regularity of nature's master-pieces, and we acknowledge each beautiful of its kind.

But this is different far from that amazed delight with which we gaze upon the rare, yet to-be-met-with, specimens of beauty, still more exquisite, by which we are every moment taken by surprise, and where wonder forms the chief spell of our fresh springing admiration; where we see black folds of glossy hair shrouding a snow white brow, and bright blue eye; or where an orb of hazel, or still

more eloquent grey, beams on a cheek of bloom ; or where auburn ringlets curl round an eye of black, whose long dark lashes fall on a colourless cheek, from which early care has too soon plucked the roses.

These are a few of the many incongruous yet fascinating combinations which nature loves to effect, baffling our conjectures as to what is beautiful, and leaving perfection as undefinable as it is various.

Malvide's was, to my taste, a sample of beauty's best variety. I cannot venture to describe the fluctuating charms of her countenance, which displayed an ever shifting sameness of loveliness, like the moving surface of the sea, each instant changing, but eternally the same. Her hair was dark ; her brow, and cheek, and bosom brightly fair ; her eyes deep grey—long liquid shapes, not starting out as if to peer into the world, but retiring rather towards the brain, from which they drew their intellectual beams. Her mouth—that next best feature of the face, whose every movement telegraphs the mind, ere the tongue can speak its bidding—was neither small nor large, a happy medium between primness and expanse ; lips bedewed and ripe, sufficiently apart to let the soft breath keep them moist, and the white teeth shine between ; the neither one indented towards the chin, and the upper softly marked with the silken down, which is as essential to the beauty of a dark haired woman, as the fringe that gives expression to her eye, or the ringlets that adorn her brow.

I can go no further in this sketch. Let the retail dealers in beauty each fill it up as he may choose ; and, with such elements as I have described, I defy any or all to convert Malvide into aught but what she *was*, a beautiful—a *perfectly* beautiful girl.

While I was employed in collecting the materials for my most imperfect portrait, let it not be supposed that Father Munoz was indifferent to the subject of *his* care. And I think my readers will already have acquitted me of a rising charge of levity at such a time, by anticipating the monk's announcement that Don Melchior's wound was not, in the least degree, dangerous. Such was, in fact, the happy intelligence promptly announced to the anxious lookers on. A rib—but heaven knows which, and anatomists may inquire—those natural bulwarks which so often thwart the deadly designs of blade and bullet, had interposed between the knife of the assassin and the hero's life. The former was turned aside, the latter saved ; and the rush of blood which caused us such alarm, was, perhaps, the best token of the intended victim's preservation.

When the salutary pain inflicted in the dressing of Don Melchior's wound brought him to a sense of his suffering and his actual state, his first exclamation was "Malvide !" and he wildly looked around for her on whom he called. His eyes fell upon Father Munoz's face, and a surprised ejaculation escaped him.

"What do I see ?" cried he. "Is this possible—you, Mazaredo ! my long lost friend !"

"Hush, hush !" replied the monk. "It is, indeed, no other than your old friend ; but this is no time for explanation. You are hurt, but not badly ; repose is all that is required to your rapid recovery. Do not speak another word."

"But this dress, this tonsure?" for the monk's bare head showed the mark of his calling.

"Tis even so, Melchior," said, or rather sighed he, as if one passing feeling of regret rose upon him in his own despite.

"Ah, my own Malvide?" exclaimed Don Melchior, his fugitive glance having rested upon her.

"Not a word, not a word, my beloved," said she, pressing her hand against her own lips, as if the breath of *his* existence lay within them.

Scarcely a whisper broke from one of the many anxious observers, until the wounded object of their care and caution was safely laid in bed in the secret chamber of the Cagot's hut, which had been so long the place of shelter, rather than repose, to the beauteous tenant, who now resigned her refuge, and threw aside the mystery that hung round her and it.

CHAPTER XIV.

I cannot pretend to strict accuracy of dates, but for four or five days Don Melchior's convalescence went regularly on, and in less than a week he was able to leave his bed. I know not if his rapid recovery was to be attributed to the slightness of his wound, the goodness of his constitution, or the skill of his physician. But, be the chief cause what it might, I am sure that the care of his nurse was not the least. Most ably was she seconded by the assiduous old Cagot woman, who showed, on every occasion that required it, an intelligence that went as far to remove my belief in the incorrigible dullness of her race, as her benevolence went to confirm my conviction of their susceptibility to the best feelings of humanity. And I may perhaps thus passingly be allowed to hope, that should any one, led by these pages to visit this excellent old being in her wild retreat, find any difficulty in discovering *her*, they will let *their* benevolence take place of their curiosity, or go hand in hand with it, and seek out other objects among the proscribed race, who will, I venture to predict, repay, at least with gratitude, all the kindness that may be shown them.

Don Melchior being installed in the whilom secret chamber, Malvide became the temporary tenant of my closet while I shifted my quarters to the Inn at Gedro, and took possession of the same moiety of a room which I had occupied on the first night of this adventurous epoch. My days were passed entirely at the Cagot's hut, and the frequent companion of my walk backwards and forwards was Father Munoz, who, though much occupied with the care of his unfortunate and defeated comrades, with his own political correspondence and personal concerns, still found time enough to devote to the duty he

had undertaken towards his former friend, with whom he passed hours together in secret conversation. I observed that he had made a point of not seeing Malvide in any of his visits. This was an understood arrangement between Don Melchior and himself, and I was quickly made acquainted with it and its cause by the sweet girl whose modesty made her pass the subject over lightly, and evinced no vanity on an occasion that might, more than most others, have excused a display of that most natural and most general weakness of our nature.

Malvide and myself became, as may be supposed, in a short time, very intimate. While Don Melchior and Father Munoz were shut up together, she and I used to walk in the neighborhood of the hut, through the ravine which was the scene of such eventful occurrences, or in the many intricate paths around, to me before unknown, but which were as familiar to her as the izaras which we frequently disturbed in these rambles. We never, however, went out of call from the hut; and Malvide perpetually broke off in recitals of former events, to listen to the hoarse voice of the old woman, who, by a particular sound, gave signal of the monk's departure on a round of professional visits to his wounded soldiers, distributed in rude tents, throughout the valleys of Estaube and Heas.

It was chiefly in those walks with Malvide, as well as in snatches of conversation with Don Melchior, and from glimpses of confidential chat breaking through the monk's habitual reserve, that I learned enough of former circumstances to be able to enter fully into the feelings and objects of the whole trio. It was not long afterwards till I became perfectly acquainted with all the connecting links of their history, inasmuch as it formed a chain to bind them now together; and I will, for my readers' satisfaction, throw into as brief a form as possible, the details of former events, so necessary to an understanding of the scenes which I have been just reciting, and of those which succeeded them so quickly.

I pass over, as foreign to the interest of my story, many bustling occupations which broke in on the course of affairs at the hut during Don Melchior's convalescence, such as the visits of Sergeant Passepartout, who showed himself throughout this interval in a quite new aspect, smothering the flame of his constitutional gallantry, suppressing the uprisings of his national vanity, and silencing the voice of his provincial *gasconading*, for the province itself furnishes the only sufficient epithet to express the thing. He was respectful to the lady, who, under her peasant's disguise, he had made love to, good-naturedly solicitous about the man he had saved, and totally silent, as to the villain he slew. He gained the good will and esteem of all concerned, and did not take one liberty in consequence, which was the certain method of preserving what he had acquired. In our moments of familiar chat, he could not, however, help dropping some hints as to his affair with the Arragonese countess, who turned out after all to be an actress from the theatre of Astorga, and the niece of one of the worthy cures, forming part of the fugitives of the Faith. But the sergeant was quite satisfied with his conquest, and I felt no inclination to disturb him in its possession, nor to stand in the way of the score of designs he professed against the wives and daughters of the

muleteers, and the widows of the poor devils who had been killed in the late affair, who wanted consolation.

One of the most unpleasant interruptions to the dreary tranquility of the place, was caused by the burying of the dead bodies. This occupied two whole days, during which Sergeant Passepartout showed an admirable aptitude for the situation of undertaker and sexton. Under his auspices and the superintendence of his party, some dozens of fine fellows were flung into their graves, head or feet foremost, as the case might be. Neither ceremony nor ceremonial attended their burial. No rites of religion were observed, save the murmured prayer of some kind comrade, as the sods were shovelled in upon each body; and the holiest water that could be sprinkled over them were the tears dashed off from deep bronzed cheeks by hands that had rarely been dipped in the *benetier*. A mass was said by Father Munoz the following Sunday in the church of Gavernie, for the repose of the souls of the fallen. I witnessed this ceremony, and was struck by the imposing and almost more than earthly bearing of the monk, as he paid this gorgeous tribute to the memory of his gone companions. But I was more moved an evening or two afterwards, when, strolling alone over the battle field, I saw a solitary and worn looking man, sitting upon a newly dug grave, and, with some rude instrument, chiselling the name of his comrade, who rotted beneath, on a stupendous mass of granite, a monument large enough to have furnished mausoleums for half the grandes of Spain. The name was, I think, Antonio Ostolazo; but that matters little; it is still to be seen by any one who will explore the desolate vale of Estanbe and the pedestals of Mount Perdu, and I may safely promise a surer immortality to the owner of this eternal monument, than can be afforded by the mouldering fanes which enshrine so many more celebrated and much prouder soldiers.

When these last duties were performed, the remainder of Father Munoz's disjointed band dispersed itself still wider than ever across the sheltering soil of France, and no chance remaining for another attempt at entering Spain in this quarter, those who were unmaimed during the last effort, went off in different directions towards Bayonne or Toulouse, in search of some new portion of the expelled fanatics, to whose fortunes they might unite their own ill luck. The wounded were, one by one, removed farther into the country, towards the hospitals established for the French army, in which they found effectual succor; so that, at the end of a week, scarcely any of "the Faith," remained near us, and those only of the most desperately and hopelessly wounded, with their wives, and a compassionate monk or two, who had humanity enough not to abandon them quite.

The patriot troops had, after a day or two, retired; Count Pinati Mina's lieutenant, having come across the hills, after the gallant affair of Puycerda, to take the command of Don Melchior's little division, and join it to the main body of the Catalan army, as Mina's force was now named.

I have not attempted to sketch the various instances of devoted attachment shown by his soldiers on the occasion of Don Melchior's wound, or during the time of recovery. It was by force almost that he succeeded in getting them away, from the bivouac they had es

tablished near the hut, which they, although disarmed like the others on entering the French territory were resolved to watch by and defend against all other treachery on the part of the fanatics; whose bands they suspected to contain more than one villain of Sanchez's stamp. Sergeant Passepatout also insisted on placing a guard of his men on the hut, to preserve it from foul play; and at my strong solicitation joined with Malvide's, Don Melchior consented to this the first day, but on Father Munoz pledging his own faith for the fair conduct of his followers, all other precautions were given up, and nothing arose to make us repent of the confidence thus placed in them through him.

Having so far cleared the channel through which my story is to run, I will now, without disturbing the current of events, turn to that backwater of narration, which steadies but does not weaken the stream.

CHAPTER XV.

Don Francisco de Trevazos the father of Don Melchior, one of the innumerable nobles who swarmed in Spain, had held a lucrative situation in the court of Charles IV. previous to his abdication. He was confined in it by Ferdinand, having been one of the persons who particularly favored the designs of the young prince, whom public opinion and state necessity have preserved from being considered a usurper. But Don Francisco was, like many others, actuated by excellent motives in abetting the designs of Ferdinand. Indignant at the virtual sovereignty of the vile Godoy, and deceived by the promise of good in the young prince's character, which was blasted in its very blossoming, the father of our hero, with the majority of the nation, learned too late the extent of their mistake, and found that of two evils they had taken *the least*—only because it wanted energy to make itself the greater. Don Francisco, was a cordial friend of liberality and reform; his efforts, united with those of many eminent associates, all tended to the ineffectual task of inculcating his own principles into the mind of the new monarch. But a hopeless despondency succeeded to these exertions, and all the truly patriotic men of Spain, waited anxiously for some occasion to take a bold and decisive step towards the regeneration of their country.

It was at this time that the imbecile and unworthy Ferdinand resolved on his memorable visit to Bayonne, the scene not less of his disgrace than of Napoleon's dishonor. Many, and among them Don Francisco, saw the consequences of this step, and expostulated with the principal ministers on its imprudence. But it appears too evident, that Ferdinand himself was obstinate in his resolution, with a certain knowledge of what was to be the result.

The conferences and conventions at Bayonne, ended in the formal renunciation of the throne of Spain by Ferdinand and his father, in the nomination of Joseph Buonaparte to the vacant dignity, and the occupation of almost all the strong places in the country by the troops of the French Emperor. This is not the place to canvass political questions, and I pass by the meanness of Ferdinand and the violence of Napoleon, to consider for a moment the situation of those who acted in accordance with the principles which guided the father of my hero, and influenced so deeply the fate of Don Melchior himself.

Joseph, acting either from his own impulse or by excellent advice, made an admirable selection of ministers. They were named at Bayonne in July 1808, and the new king entered his kingdom under the sanction of the names of the best and most enlightened men, who had filled high offices under Charles IV. and Ferdinand. All the public functionaries were confirmed in their places, and they almost all acquiesced in their nomination, and became at once *Afrancesados*, as the adherents of Joseph were soon named.

Under this arrangement, Don Francisco de Travazos continued to hold his place, and he, in common with almost all the whole of the nobility and corporate bodies of Spain, gave his willing allegiance to the new king and paid him homage.

No usurper ever mounted a throne with more plausible pretensions or fairer prospects than Joseph. Nominated by his brother, the most powerful of king makers—succeeding to Ferdinand the most contemptible of kings—hailed by the country as a deliverer—the opening acts of his government, being the suppression of that monstrous tribunal impiously called *koly*; the formation of codes of laws; appropriation of church lands to the wants of the state, and the consequent relief of the subject; encouragement of public instruction; patronage of arts, manufacturers, and commerce:—these were the titles of Joseph to his throne, and the excuses of those Spaniards who adopted his claim. If others were wanted, they might be found in the fact of foreign families having reigned over the country since the Austrian succession,—in the absolute necessity of a new dynasty to purge away the abuses of the old—and in the example of the great continental states, which approved and confirmed the appointment of Joseph, and sanctioned the submission of Spain. But having thus briefly considered the arguments in favor of the *Afrancesados*,* I hurry to remove any notion, which might arise in the reader's mind, that, while making allowances for them, I do not give my whole sympathy to the splendid patriots by whom they were opposed. No! Glory to the brave spirits, which shone forth at that crisis in the fate of Europe, teaching to despots, through their proudest peer, that men must not be bartered like brutes, nor countries transferred like estates, even though a good master be given for a bad one. Freedom may be forced on nations, as maniacs take medicine, by compulsion; and the patriots of Spain taught this lesson to the world,

* I would refer the reader interested in the subject, to the able writings and incontrovertible reasonings of Rianosa, Marina, Liorente, and Blaquiere.

that it is better to establish the great principle of liberty, even at the cost of quick recurring bondage, than enjoy for awhile comparative happiness, by fixing a precedent of enduring slavery. Such were the views of Porlier, Lacy, Mina, and the rest of the since murdered and proscribed martyrs; such the inspiration that raised the spirit of resistance, which spread on wings of flame, at once desolating and purifying the land. Joseph was driven from his throne, as the type of that presumptuous principle which placed him on it, and Ferdinand recovered his kingdom, by virtue of the imprescriptible right of which he was the unworthy emblem.

Twelve thousand *Afrancesados* followed Joseph into France, giving to him a proud proof of personal attachment, and to nations, generally, a fine lesson of fidelity. Among the refugees were Don Francisco de Trevazos, with his numerous family, and Luis Mazaredo, a physician of Madrid, and his only son Munoz, then a boy of about fourteen years of age. The expatriated Spaniards fixed themselves chiefly in the towns and villages of the South of France, in sight of those frontiers from which they were proscribed, envying the fortunate patriots who remained possessors of the soil, but proudly conscious of their own pure motives in the very conduct which had brought upon them destruction and disgrace.

Toulouse possessed many advantages for such of the settlers as had money to support the expenses of a principal provincial town. Education, the chief object with heads of families, was the main cause of Don Francisco, his family, and Doctor Mazaredo fixing there; and the four sons of the former, with the doctor's only child, and several other young Spaniards, were soon established as inmates in the college.

It is not more easy to account for school friendships, than for those of riper years. One is as much the result of some chance circumstance as the other; and it is scarcely of any importance to know by what means the intimacy of young Melchior and his companion Munoz was contracted. For three or four years, during which they remained together in college, their attachment continued to increase, and the totally different cast of their minds and utter dissimilarity of character were the means of preserving it unimpaired. They were within a week or two of the same age, and when they came to be seventeen or eighteen years old, their dispositions were fully developed. Melchior always destined for the military service, burned with impatience to commence his career. Munoz, intended by his father for his own profession, applied himself assiduously to its study. The rank of Don Francisco, the ample pension he enjoyed from the French government, and the lucky preservation of a large property, which he had prudently transferred into foreign funds, enabled young Melchior to maintain an excellent appearance, and go much into society, in the atmosphere of which alone he seemed to live. Doctor Mazaredo was poor, scantily pensioned, and only enabled by the profits of his profession to support himself and his son respectably, and without show. Munoz was, moreover, of a turn quite the reverse of his friend, hating company, shunning the world, and giving himself wholly up to abstruse and theoretic study.

Melchior had many opportunities just then of meeting in company Malvide d'Euplandre, only daughter of a man of ancient family and high rank, at that time a warm adherent of the Emperor and of his family, who lived almost entirely at his chateau, on the banks of the Garonne, a place admirably suited to the indulgence of the deep attachment which almost spontaneously sprung up in the breasts of the young couple. In a few months they were lovers, of the most decided, and, as we have seen, of the most determined stamp.

Munoz had but few chances of seeing Malvide. He never spoke to her; but it so happened, that a sympathy of feeling with his friend, on that one particular point, made him also an adorer of this beautiful girl, to see whom was to love. An accidental glimpse of her person, and a few words caught from her dulcet voice, acted on the inflammable feelings of Munoz, with a violence that was irresistible. No female had ever before created the slightest rensation in his mind, and a passion now burst forth on this insufficient excitement, like a volcano throwing out its self-engendered flames. He encouraged and fed this phrenzy even while he felt that it consumed him; and in the silence and solitude of his college, he had no one resource to turn the current of his diseased sensations. But he possessed, as well as Melchior, a great degree of that fine quality of sentiment, which irresistibly impels the lover to keep his secret to himself. Neither of them therefore made the other his confidant. Melchior was too much occupied with his mistress to discover Munoz's passion; but the later found out, from various causes, that Melchior was the enamored and accepted lover of the woman he adored. He had hopelessly, desperately, cherished this idolatry for a person he had never spoken to, and but once heard speak! But he was, even in his early youth, one of the most eccentric and incalculable of mortals—and this character he was now about to establish, by an extraordinary and unlooked for, but still consistent freak. Deterred by his circumstances and station in life from indulging the slightest degree of hope of obtaining the object of his extravagant passion, and making a wild and irrational estimate of friendship and the duties which he thought it imposed, he at once resolved to give up the notion of Malvide, and to remove any bar which his presence might by possibility create to the progress of his friend's pursuit. Thus consoling himself for the imaginary relinquishment of a mistress whom he never knew, by the unreal security of a friendship the advantages of which he was flinging away, he formed and put into execution the design of abandoning France, unknown to all, and absolutely, and at once, retiring from the world for ever.

He quitted the college without notice or preparation—and he did not even leave a letter for his friend Melchior, having too strict a regard for truth to conceal it had he written, and dreading the possible effect it might produce on his friend, and consequently on the friendship which he valued more than life. For his father, he left a letter expressive of his sudden but fixed determination to abandon the world; and he entered Spain and joined the pious possessors of one of its many convents, and soon became as wild an enthusiast in the mysteries of religion, as he had been an extravagant worshipper at

the shrine of passion. All this was in accordance with his extraordinary character, and not wonderful in a boy of eighteen. Having gone through all preliminary forms, and thoroughly prepared himself for the career on which he was about to enter, he finally took the vows of his order, and became soon distinguished amongst his brethren for his deep piety, his lofty conceptions, his learning, and his medical skill. He devoted all his worldly thoughts to the perfect acquirement of the killing-or-curing art, and his celebrity soon spread beyond the walls of his retreat: and thus distinguished in that little circle of renown he might have lived and died, had not the political events of his time inflamed his mind with a new excitement, and forced him from his obscurity into the agitated arena of revolutionary life.

Don Melchior, in the mean time, had gone through his noviciate as a military man, having been removed by his father to the college of St. Cyr, whence he started to join the regiment of cavalry to which he was appointed; but the rapid succession of political movements at that period, depriving France of her military chieftain and military character, our hero had but the experience of one short and disastrous campaign, that which began with the defeat of the Prussians at Fleurus, and ended with the overwhelming discomfiture of their conquerors at Waterloo. Melchior fought in both battles, and in the intervening affair of Quatre-bras, and he acquired, on those days of desperate conflict, a feeling of respect for British valor and fortitude that almost amounted to adoration. Don Melchior was a true *liberal*. He inherited from his father the best principles of civil freedom, and he added a wide toleration of religious tenets that sprung from a spontaneous independence of mind. Heretic and papist were with him empty words. Conscience was the only tribunal he acknowledged in these matters; and he felt that a community of political interests might fairly and safely exist between men whose religious feelings were as widely separated as the poles. His mind was instinct with notions like these. They were confirmed by the general liberality of his military companions; and the licentiousness in which the latter indulged produced no effect on our hero, beyond teaching him its danger and exciting his disgust. He had entered the French service, because that of his own country was out of his reach, and because, educated in France, he spoke its language and followed its manners and customs like a native; but he felt himself still a Spaniard; and though possessing a hereditary attachment to Joseph and a contempt for Ferdinand, he burned with enthusiasm at the thoughts of those heroes who had expelled the former and now groaned under the latter; and he anxiously awaited the day when he might join the ranks of the patriots who abounded in Spain, and whose bosoms throbbed with the desire to set her free.

On the disbanding the army of the Loire, our young soldier retired to his father's residence at Toulouse, and here he returned with new ardor to the indulgence of his passion for Malvide d'Euplandre. The lovers had regularly corresponded during Melchior's absence; and this short but perilous separation was all that had been wanting to rivet the chains by which the young pair so willingly allowed them-

selves to be bound ; and for some weeks they revelled in the luxury of secret love. But the total change of circumstances in young Melchoir's family, resulting from the ruin of Napoleon, made the avowal of this attachment then impossible. The pensions hitherto paid to the exiled Afrancesados were discontinued on the accession of Louis XVIII.; and the consideration in which they had been held during the influence of Joseph was now replaced by every mark of distrust and detestation. The virulent hostility of the Spanish government was unbounded, and that of France showed but little wish to alleviate the sufferings of a body of men whom they *did* hate, and affected to despise.

Don Francisco and his sons felt neither a right nor an inclination to interfere in the politics of a country which afforded them shelter. The father, therefore, cautiously abstained from any public manifestation of his opinions ; and the three grown up brothers, including our hero resolved to embark for South America, and there join the standard of independence, under which so many gallant exiles from old Spain were at that moment fighting. Melchior parted from Malvide, with proud sentiments of confidence in her, and that sanguine certainty of success which is the instinctive feeling that raises the ambitious man so much above the level of his kind.

Malvide had much of the heroine in her character. High-minded and tender-hearted, with a strong intellect and warm feelings, she loved her lover not less for his lofty aspirations than for the overflowing softness of sentiment by which they were tempered. She liked romantic incident and feeling—not that vapid, common-place kind which sinks its votaries into languishment and affectation—but those spirited breaks in the equalities of action and thought, which give vigor to the mind and animation to the monotony of life. Her grief at parting with her lover was much assuaged by the effect of this disposition and during three years of his adventurous career in the new world, her anxiety for his safety at once prayed upon and supported her spirit. She did not pine away during this agitating interval ; but her mind was centered in one object with an intensity that would have worn out an intellect less elastic than hers.

Melchoir ran a rapid and brilliant career in Venezuela and other parts of South America where liberty was triumphant. His two brothers perished in the struggle, one in action with Marillo's troops, the other in a desperate sea engagement, in which he commanded a patriot sloop. These losses inflamed young Melchoir's hatred to the cause of despotism and its agents ; and among other effusions of his highly excited mind, the following (which I thought worth translation) escaped him at this period.

TO THE WARRIORS OF CHILI.

Rouse Men of Freedom for the fight,
In Freedom's majesty and might !

Let the sound of your march be sabers clashing,
Let your signal sign be the cannon's flashing,
And your battle-ory " Our Right ! "

When furious to the field you rush,
 Sweep on, as the herded wild horse dashes
 O'er the Pampas* trampled by his crush—
 Be your charge like the trophic shower which splashes
 So loud that the thunder's roar is hush,
 Or seems rolling faint and hgh,
 A whirlwind of the upper sky!

Gaze on yon tempest-driven clouds;
 Shattered through Heaven's wide space they fly—
 Thus let the Despots' servile crowds
 Shrink from you, Sons of Liberty!
 Think, as you rush on the hireling hordes,
 What cause ye serve when their bosoms bleed—
 And know that each gleam from your brandshed swords
 Is a watchlight for a Nation freed!

Our hero became so distinguished for his intrepidity and talent, on several occasions, that he gained rapid promotion in the Columbian service, and was much noticed by Bolivar, who held out many inducements to him to identify himself by neutralization with the country he had so disinterestedly served. But no persuasion had one instant's influence with Melchior, whose whole thoughts turned towards his native country and the girl he loved. He had made a name his great object in the perils and privations he had voluntarily encountered; and having aided in the establishment of liberty in America, he now prepared to return to Europe, certain of having acquired a claim upon the liberal feeling of Spain, and hoping to have established for himself an influence in the good opinion of the father of Malvide.

Full of these prospects, he took leave of the scene of his exploits and the companions of his glory; and embarking on board an English merchant ship, he arrived safely in London early in December, 1819. During a stay of a few days there, he met several Spaniards to whom his reputation was well known, and by one of those, an agent from Cadiz, he was initiated into the secret of the preparations for revolt, at that time on the point of completion in the army near that place, under the direction of Riego, Quiroga, and their companions. Don Melchoir did not hesitate for a moment in the course to be pursued; but leaving London, immediately, he proceeded to Falmouth, whence a packet was on the point of sailing for Gibraltar. A quick passage favored his views, and from that fortress he passed safely across the frontier, and with strong letters of introduction from his London friends, he arrived at Las Cabezas de San Juan, Riego's quarters, on the last day of the year 1819. A hurried but animated and interesting conference, took place between these gallant spirits, on the night of that day—and the next morning, the 1st of January 1820, the constitutional flag was unfurled upon long suffering Spain, and liberty proclaimed.

* The immense plains of waving grass which extend for nearly one thousand miles between the banks of the Plata and Chili, are called Pampas by the Spaniards.

Melchior, in the first instance, acted as a volunteer on Riego's staff, but in a few days he was placed in command of a portion of that hero's immortal little army; and he personally shared in all its harassing and dubious enterprise, until the final acceptance of the constitution by Ferdinand, and the triumphant establishment of freedom. Raised to the very pinnacle of delight by this rapid accomplishment of all his *public* hopes, the ardent mind of Don Melchior could imagine no possibility of failure in those private and personal views, to which he now thought he might in strictest duty turn his undivided attention. He obtained, through the influence of his gallant chief Riego, an appointment under the immediate command of Mina (who had recently returned from France, and was nominated Captain General of Navarre,) and he immediately repaired to the scene of his new duties. He obtained from Mina a short leave of absence, to pay a visit to his family and friends at the other side of the Pyrenees. He quickly passed the route between Pampeluna and Perpignan; and being now, as it were, within reach of all he loved, compared at least with the distances which had so lately separated them, his heart acknowledged the near approach to his immediate family; but he still felt as if half the globe intervened between him and the dearest object of his affections and the last league he had to traverse in his rapid journey, seemed infinitely the longest since he left Colombia.

Malvide was apprised of her lover's approach, as she had been of all his movements since he returned to Europe, through the medium of Felix, a trusty servant of her father, almost her earliest playmate, and, since childhood up, her faithful ally, long in the confidence of herself and Don Melchior, and wholly devoted to their interest. By his contrivances a correspondence had been carried on for several years in perfect secrecy and safety; and Melchior's last letter, two days before the one fixed for his arrival, gave the joyous news for which her heart had so long panted, and which now seemed too much for it to bear.

A hint dropped of an interesting event, is, I know, like seed sown upon that most fertile field, a reader's imagination. Is it not then enough for me to say that Melchior came, that Malvide received him, that their interview was as secret as it was holy—and will not a rich harvest of imaginings spontaneously spring up in every reader's mind? Will not all instantly recollect what passed, once at least in their lives, in their own individual cases?—and can it be necessary to enter into details of what the whole world knows by heart? In the present instance, at all events, I can give no minute particulars; for though I pressed both Melchior and Malvide to be very exact and communicative at this part of their story, they both assured me they *could* not, for they did not recollect a word that had passed at their meeting. They only remembered the gnawing, restless, enchanting wretchedness with which they awaited the appointed hour; the rapture with which they respectively caught each other's figure in the moon-light grove by the river side; the beating of heart, and swimming of brain when they pronounced each other's name; and the delirious forgetfulness of all beside when they stood clasped in firm embrace. Their only feeling was that nothing human could sever them; but Felix, ere long undeceived them, by rushing

towards them, dragging them from each other's arms, forcibly carrying Don Melchior to the boat from which he had just landed, and leaving Malvide almost fainting on a bench, from which she was roused by her father himself, who had wandered out, thus *malapropos*, to enjoy the beauties of the evening, and destroy a scene of extacy that was worth them all.

Fortunately no discovery attended this interruption. A succession of interviews gave the lovers time to calm their transports, and an interchange of ideas and opinions led to a more rational consideration of the measures which their mutual happiness required them to adopt. Melchior was received by his father and mother, his remaining brother, and two sisters, with all the feelings of pride and pleasure, excited by the happy return and honorable success of a son and brother; but dear as those greetings were, they were of very inferior import to those in another quarter, and I therefore leave them to the reader's fancy, certain that it will not dwell upon them much longer than I do myself.

The Vicomte d'Euplandre, the father of Malvide, was glad to see his old favorite Melchior safely returned from his various exploits—but he had no interest in the exploits themselves, and was by no means pleased at the triumphant aspect of the cause, which our hero had entered into with such distinguished zeal. In fact the Vicomte had changed his political opinions. He had conveniently cast off his attachment to the Bonaparte family when fortune ceased to be on visiting terms with them; and being now a warm worshipper of the newly risen sun of Bourbon prosperity, he discovered for every flagrant act of Ferdinand some excellent excuse, and in the noble conduct of the patriot liberators of Spain he saw nothing but the most atrocious guilt. He very shortly took occasion to inform Melchior of this, and gave him to understand that he would not be sorry to be freed from the danger of infection which lurked in every fold of his young friend's reputation, and which he dreaded might communicate itself to the very susceptible sympathy of his own countrymen. He therefore did every thing but recommend Melchior to hurry back to Spain; and gave him plainly, though not broadly, to understand, that *that* interview was to end their intercourse.

The shock which all this would have produced to Melchior's sanguine mind was broken, in some measure, by the previous hints he had received from his own family of the Vicomte's change of opinions, or principles—or whatever else they might be conveniently and respectfully called. In the few minutes snatched from love and its immediate topics, the lovers discussed with condensed energy the course to be followed. It was mutually agreed that no abrupt declaration was to be made by Melchior. He was to wait awhile, until matters become consolidated in Spain, and the efforts which he was, with others, making to procure an amnesty for the exiled *Afrancesados* might enable his father to resume his former station in his own country, and entitle him to claim an alliance for his son with the daughter of the Vicomte, according to the cold and commercial forms of French marriages. Having thus arranged, and thus postponed the open avowal of their mutual passion, the lovers once more separated, confident in the reciprocal attachment which they felt that

nothing could now shake, and scarcely less certain of the eventual happiness of which they *would* not entertain a doubt.

The year 1820 trailed slowly on, according to the estimate of the lovers; and flew fast away, in the opinion of those whose hopes for the good of Spain led them to look to a favorable adjustment of her many difficulties. The clash of her parties was echoed beyond her frontiers, and the discontent of her former despot found sympathy in the feelings of those who thought his debasement might lead to their own. The liberal patriots of Spain had to combat against a host of besetting evils, and they found full employment in endeavoring to avert, or prepare for the dangers which they saw in perspective. The army was strengthened as much as was consistent with the means of the state, and our hero, with the other military officers of distinction, was incessantly employed in the formation of the new levies. He had sufficient interest to keep his place near the frontiers, and he there contrived through the agency of Felix, the only confidant of his amor, to keep up a constant correspondence with Malvide. Fatigued not less by his military occupations than by the harassing anxieties of hope deferred, an old wound received in South America caused him considerable annoyance, and he was ordered to the Baths of Barege, on the French side of the Pyrenees, the sovereign remedy for injuries of the nature of that under which he suffered. The summer of 1821 saw him fairly established there—not so much for considerations of health as for those of happiness; for Malvide had persuaded her father to consent to the family passing the season at Bagneres, that delightful residence for all who would see nature in its loveliest aspects, and be within reach of its most wild and bold varieties.

In the paths of this romantic region Malvide and Melchior once more revived the oft-breathed vows of eternal fidelity; and every auxiliary of time and place added to the picturesque enthusiasm of their attachment. The father, unsuspecting to the very last of the extent of their intimacy, threw no obstruction in their way. He could not reasonably decline the visits of his old friend's son on the ground of political opinions, for nothing hostile had yet broken out between their respective nations, and it was only on those grounds that he wished to withdraw from the acquaintance. Don Francisco, with the remainder of his family, had in the mean time returned to Spain, in virtue of the permission tardily granted by the liberal government—liberal, in every thing, to the utmost extent of their powers, except in their intolerant treatment of the *Afrancesados*, which formed a deep stain on the general purity of their measures. These long persecuted men were at length allowed to enter Spain, but the permission was joined with indignities which nothing but the inherent love of country could have prompted them to submit to. They were declared to have forfeited all their honorary distinctions and rank, and to be unworthy of future employment in the service of that land, for whose good they had labored and suffered so much. Harsh terms, but still accepted by many, who, with feelings of true patriotism, acknowledged insult an injury to be more than atoned for by the

privilege of once more treading their native soil, and of laying their bones beneath it.

During daily excursions to all points of interest in the scenes around them, Melchior and Malvide became thoroughly intimate with the most retired and secret recesses of the mountains ; and the rude inhabitants were often the objects of their bounty. Among others, the wretched Cagots excited, at first, their curiosity, next their compassion ; and a chance shelter, taken during a sudden storm at the hut, with which my readers are already well acquainted, ended in many acts of kindness to the poor old couple who owned it, from her who was afterwards to become its heroine—and mine.

CHAPTER XVI.

Another separation came, another absence, a renewed correspondence—again a meeting, under circumstances of unusual, and, I may say, of most romantic interest. Frequently, during their summer sojourn in the Pyrenees, did Melchior, in all the vehemence of his affection, implore Malvide's consent to his demanding her formally of her parents ; and on her strenuous representations of the certain denial which would bring ruin on their dearest hopes, he used to urge, with the eloquence of passionate entreaty, a private marriage, to put refusal of its legal confirmation beyond the power of parents, proud of their own honor, and feeling it compromised in that of their child. But this latter proposition was more repugnant to Malvide's principles than the former seemed dangerous to her passion for Melchior. I must not enter into a detail of the motives which induced her decidedly to object to this clandestine marriage, or of the arguments by which her lover hoped to enforce his proposal. It was enough that she viewed such a step with the feelings of horror common to all French females of family and condition, and she vowed that she never would consent to this measure of desperation until driven to the very last extremity. She was firm ; he submitted perforce ; and he was soon with his troops in Catalonia, and she at her father's chateau in Languedoc. There another winter and another spring "dragged their slow length along ; and in due succession came the summer of 1822, which was destined to bring about the catastrophe of the chequered drama, in which Melchior and Malvide had still to sustain so great a share of anxiety and agitation.

It was in the course of that summer, while thick coming events threw doubt and danger over every hope for Spanish happiness, and filled with a thousand inquietudes the breasts of the lovers, that Melvide's father, with an abruptness more peremptory than parental, informed her of a proposal of marriage, her acceptance of which he considered quite a matter of course.

The match was, in the common acceptation of terms, unexceptionable. The suitor was young, wealthy, of good family, and good character. Malvide acknowledged all this, but she frankly told her father and mother that she would rather die than accept this lover, because a feeling worse than death was coupled with the thought of such a union. This refusal was inexplicable to the astonished parents, for they, with that short sightedness of which one finds instances every day, had no suspicion of their daughter's secret attachment, and she dared not bring herself to confess it, even now.

A scene of too common occurrence ensued, and a series of sad consequences were the result; severity on the part of the parents—useless entreaty on that of the daughter—tears and threats, prayers and persecution. Force could not in those days be attempted against the inclinations of the unhappy girl; but, dear as she was to her parents, a train of unpremeditated, yet torturing unkindness was the result of their wounded pride and disappointed hopes. Parents are certainly sometimes to be pitied on these occasions, but never more so than when they bring on their own and their children's suffering by a false estimate of the authority and the obedience, which, duly balanced, should form the happiness of all. In the present case, I can, however, give no sympathy but to my heroine; but I confess myself not an unprejudiced person—and I hope my readers will be all biased the same way as I was, for I wish them not only to excuse but to admire the whole conduct of Malvide.

Her character was now put to the test. The whole host of opposing passions and sentiments were aroused. Instinct and feeling—reason, reflection, love, duty, were all fermenting in her mind, with a force that would have been fatal to intellect as well as happiness, had she not by a bold exertion decided on the course to be pursued, with a vigor suited only to a desperate case; but which in such as her's I should be glad to see adopted as a precedent. There is a line of demarkation between resistance and submission. It exists for children as well as for nations; and filial no more than political obedience can be expected to go further. This line is no doubt fine drawn, and sometimes difficult to distinguish.—It twists and serpentines, too, according to circumstances and character;—and in fact the tracing of it must be left to that discriminating tact, that prompt sense of what is right, which is clear in seeing, and quick in doing. My heroine possessed, in my opinion, that ready sensitiveness in an eminent degree. Acting upon it, she let her submission to her parents go its full extent. She acknowledged their right to suggest a husband to her; but not to dictate one. She admitted their privilege of rejecting her choice—but not such a choice as Melchoir. Reason and sentiment combined to convince her that *he* was out of the pale of her parent's jurisdiction—and her mind was made up at last to act on that conviction. Firmly bearing up against all the points of petty tyranny in which her father and mother vented their feelings of wounded pride and disappointed expectation, she even endured the torture of a detested suitor's persecuting endearments, while her heart was torn by anxiety for her lover's dangerous situation, for the leagued bands of bigotry had begun to assume an attitude of offence, and several warm actions had been fought between them and the patriots. Malvide saw that the crisis of her fate, her

character, and her happiness had arrived—and she acted with a prudence befitting such a time. She wrote to Malchoir, detailing her situation, her feelings, and her determination. She announced her intention of confessing their attachment to her parents, of soliciting the consent which she had still no hope of their granting; and in case of their refusal, she declared her resolution of setting off, at all hazards to her personal safety or to her fame, to throw herself under the only protection which she would thenceforth acknowledge as legitimate and legal. She pointed out the Cagot's hut, as the place of her rendezvous, and the safest shelter that circumstances would admit of; and she fixed a day for her arrival there, either accompanied by her father, and sanctioned by his consent to their union, or alone, and resolved to join her fate irrevocably with his.

This letter despatched, and a sufficient time allowed for it to reach Don Melchior, she made the ample revelation of her long-cherished secret to her parents, and detailed the progress and the actual state of her attachment, on the very evening previous to the one fixed for the actual signing of the hated marriage contract. The mother was moved at this account of her daughter's constancy, and of the good conduct evinced in her rejection of Melchior's proposal for a private marriage. She looked from time to time at her husband through the big tears which stood in her eyes, emblematic of the fulness of her heart, and it only wanted one word—one gesture of consent from the Vicomte to have made her embrace her daughter and consent to her wishes, with all the ardor of motherly affection. But the Vicomte gave no sign. He was an obstinate man, without much tenderness or one atom of the romantic in his disposition. He was totally untouched by his child's appeal, totally uninfluenced by his wife's emotion. He only saw one side of the question, and that the reverse one of the brightly illumined portion which shone in the rays of sentiment and feeling. He considered Melchior as a ruined man—his cause as desperate—and his alliance an impossibility. He saw that the liberal party of Spain had no chance, no hope; that all the monarchs of the Continent were leagued against liberty—that England would stand neuter, and that Spain must fall. That conviction was enough; every other consideration was foreign to the point towards which his calculations centered. To Malvide's eloquent entreaty, he answered, "Never" striking the table with his open palm.

She turned her looks to her mother, with an imploring gesture.

"Never!" echoed the dame, taking a pinch of snuff and blowing her nose at the same moment, ashamed or afraid to put her handkerchief to her streaming eyes.

"Then my destiny is decided?" solemnly exclaimed Malvide.

"Exactly so," cried the Vicomte, pointing to the contract which lay before him.

"Exactly so," echoed the mother, tapping her snuff box; and thus the conference ended.

Those only who know the sacred feeling attached to parental authority in France can understand the sufferings of her who now resolved to violate its commands, and cast off her long allegiance. She did no underestimate the importance of the step she was about to take. She felt the full

force of that deep sentiment of veneration which had grown with her from her cradle ; and to break through the barriers it opposed to her decision, either an impetuous burst of passion, or a well weighed course of reflection was required. Had Mulvide acted on the first, her vigor would most probably have subsided into remorse ; as it was, the bold step taken—the barrier once broken down—every hour brought with it self-approval and fresh energy.

She dashed away the lingering tears that trickled down her cheek, after that last interview with her harsh father and weak mother, and her heart strings seemed new-braced, as with dry eyes and beating bosom, she commenced her preparations for flight. Felix was her only counsellor and assistant. He procured a peasant's dress, and a false passport for St. Sauveur, in the Upper Pyrenees, which was given without difficulty on his demand at the Mayor's office at Toulouse, for "Jacqueline L'Heureux, a country girl, aged twenty-two," and no *signalement* was required. Felix sent forward also a small trunk, stocked with the mere essentials of comfort, addressed to the care of some worthy Bourgeois at Bagneres de Luchon, on the very verge of Spain, an acquaintance of a friend of a relation of his, and far enough removed every way to leave but little risk of discovery through him.

A fine night favored our heroine, and no accident betrayed her. Supported on the arm of Felix, she safely passed through the lawns and woods, and reached the river side. There a boat awaited her, the same which had carried Melchior to her longing arms, on the secret visit which I have already mentioned. As she stepped over the side and took her seat in the little skiff, the memory of that delicious meeting rose upon her mind, and overpowered the sorrow which was stealing upon her, at every step which took her from the scenes of her youth. But now, revived and re-assured, she would not suffer another retrospection to interfere with the forward movement of her thoughts—she would look back no more. A league from the opposite side of the river she safely met the Bayonne Diligence in which her place was secured. There she took leave of Felix, and stepped into the crowded carriage, where she had to commence her series of masquerade concealments in a mood but little suited for the practice of such antics. She protested to me, during her recital of events, that nothing connected with her stolen journey equalled, in irksomeness, if not in actual suffering, the necessity of supporting her assumed character, of talking *patois* to her fellow travellers, and falsely answering all their inquisitive demands as to her birth, parentage, and connexions.

Quitting the Diligence at Lourdes, she proceeded on foot, following the windings of the Gave, skirted Pierrefitte, slept in a cottage inn at Luz, and continued the course of the valley of Barreges till she reached Gedro, whence she struck off, by the route I took afterwards, into the valley of Heas, and thence into that of Estaube, where she soon discovered the Cagot's hut, that bourne of the long-sought security, to attain which she had suffered so much.

But on approaching this place of rendezvous, a thousand heretofore

unknown emotions rushed upon her. The whole force of every feminine feeling seemed to assail, instead of assisting her. The wild anxiety to clasp her lover in her arms, which had hitherto urged her on—the longing desire to pour out into his bosom the flood of her secret thoughts—all this seemed checked at once; and she felt an oppression of spirits, a stagnation of feeling, instead of the buoyant delight which had, up till then, supported her. She feared she had gone too far—that delicacy was violated as duty had been defied—and that, instead of the fond embrace of an enraptured lover, she might have to encounter the chill triumph of a contemptuous conqueror. It was thus she was tortured by the cruel tears which woman is the heir to, which make her doubt the generous hearts that love her best for every step the world calls weakness, and value her the most when she considers herself of least price. There may be men—and women do well perhaps to cherish the belief—who despise the beings that doat on them, but still there are *few* such; and Melchior and his like were none of them. Malvide would have felt this too, confidently and proudly, had not that passing shade of female distrust—distrust of herself rather than him—discoloured the truth awhile, and thrown an uncertain hue upon the perspective which she was yet destined to enjoy.

She trembled as she gazed on the hut to which her limbs seemed to refuse to bear her. Once, in the conflict of feeling, which oppressed her, and almost bent her to the earth, she resolved to abandon her intention and return home. But an undefinable pang accompanied the thought, that seemed to carry despair in its suggestion. She started forward on her path, and, as if she had been flying from all the combined evils of life, she hurried up to the well known door of the hut. At every step she expected to meet Melchior, and she shuddered with terror each instant lest he might appear. Arrived at the threshold she paused once more, and she felt a faintness come across her brow. She hastily knocked, and at the same moment she raised the latch; and, tottering into the room, she sank into a chair, and covered her face with her hands, in terror of the encounter she so dreaded, yet so longed for.

It was evening. The old Cagot couple were at their meals of *cruchade*. Surprised at the abrupt entrance of a female, dressed in the costume of the district, but still a stranger, they both for a moment paused. The old man, however, carelessly resumed his occupation, while his more active and more beneficent helpmate rose and approached the agitated girl.

Malvide answered her first kind words by an inquiring stare around the chamber; and when the old woman really recognised her, and gave expression to her astonishment and pleasure, she quickly asked if Melchior were there? Being answered in the negative, she exclaimed, "Thank God! thank God!" and a flood of tears gave relief to her heart, which seemed strained to bursting.

The kind hearted old woman had not sufficient of that tormenting intelligence which just sees enough into one's sorrows to make it wish to pry deeper. She only perceived that the young lady wept; she did not inquire nor care for the cause, but confined her efforts to lessen the effect. She was just dull enough to know that that is best done by leav-

ing the disease to its own cure; and a few minutes proved the justice of her calculation, by Malvide's recovered composure, a weight of woe having apparently been heaved from her breast.

But this unnatural respite did not continue long. A sudden shock came across her mind once more, in the thought that his absence might be caused by displeasure at the bold step she had taken—by danger—by death even—and she shook in every joint while the last horrid conjecture seemed to freeze her heart. She summoned strength enough to inquire from the old woman if her lover had not been at the hut, or had sent no messenger? The chilling negatives that answered these anxious questions completed her wretchedness. She now felt indeed forlorn, and almost abandoned. If Melchior were indeed then ill—a prisoner—wounded! Such were alone the frightful probabilities her fancy conjured up; for, after a moment's thought, she would not, could not suffer the degrading notion of his abandonment of her to linger in her brain, and to believe *him* dead, was to her worse than death. Every feeling of self was then forgotten, and her only considerations were given for his safety.

This was a night of unmitigated misery to our poor heroine.—The grateful old mistress of the hut did all she could to alleviate her distress. The spare room, always ready for the chance guests which adventure might bring there, was put into its best trim. Malvide had experienced its shelter before, and she reckoned on finding enough for her wants; but as things were, accommodation more indifferent still would have amply suited her desires. She scarcely felt the texture of the bed she pressed, and seemed alive only to sensations of mental suffering. Her first rational determination was to write immediately to Felix. She had promised him to do so, when anticipating different results to what she now thought her too hasty journey; and she sat down to redeem her pledge to her faithful assistant, so agonized as to be scarcely comprehensible. Enough was, however, said to explain the distress, and intimate the possible peril of her situation; and the letter was despatched by day-break, in the care of the old woman, who undertook to forward it from Gedro to the post town of St. Sauveur; and at the same time she promised to procure a safe messenger with a horse to cross the mountain paths to Bagneres de Luchon for the little trunk, for the receipt of which our poor heroine, under the signature of Jacqueline l'Heureux, gave a proper authorization.

These matters arranged, Malvide felt something less miserable. There is, even in anxiety like her's, a relief unspeakable in the bare effort at exertion, a remedy for distress, which the sluggish half of mankind does not comprehend. Malvide having done all that depended upon her, had only to endure the lingering torments of suspense for full five days, from the time her letter to Felix was despatched, until the hour when that devoted fellow presented himself at the door of the hut, habited in the grotesque disguise, borrowed or bought from some disguised pilgrim, at which I myself soon afterwards stared.

His young mistress's delight may be imagined, by those who can have pictured the anguish of her solitary state. Felix was nearly as much rejoiced, in being the means of relieving her agitation. Almost

without a word of inquiry or salutation, and waiving all those ceremonious preparations, which less practised and less considerate confidants delight in, he put a letter into Malvide's hand. To break the seal, almost devour the contents with her eyes, and next the paper with kisses, was the work of a minute; for the letter was a short one, and from Melchior. It was scrawled hurriedly, at the very moment of a victory over the Baron D'Eroles and his fanatics; but it said enough in one or two lines to stamp it, in Malvide's regard, as the most precious epistle she had ever received, even from Melchior. It told that he was safe—that he was *her's* as ever—and that he had not received the letter she had so faithfully promised, and he so ardently looked for. Here then was the whole mystery of his non-appearance plainly cleared up, and in a way so simple, that a hysteric laugh burst from the delighted girl, at her own expense. In all the conjectures of her miserable incertitude, the easiest, the most natural of all, had never crossed her mind: her all important epistle had mis-carried; and to that moment her lover was in utter ignorance of her situation, and of her close neighborhood to him, for he was only a few leagues distant across the mountain frontier.

Malvide very soon found time to inquire with anxious solicitude for her parents, whose sufferings she imagined and deeply felt for. Felix gave a trite, but feeling description of their emotion and affright, when it was discovered that Malvide had fled—the tears and lamentations of the mother, mixed with reproaches to the cruel father, who drove her daughter to despair—the half stifled misery of the proud and cold blooded Vicomte—the alarm of the servants—and the agitation of the discarded lover. Felix declared, that though he scarcely pitied any one of the chief trio, he could hardly restrain his tears, when, as a last desperate hope of discovery, the Vicomte ordered the river to be dragged; and tottered, pale and trembling, himself into the first boat, while the worn out mother sank fainting on the bank.

At this part of his recital Malvide wrung her hands, and wept bitterly, at the thought of the misery which these unwise parents had made her the means of inflicting on them. But then came Felix's account of *his own* sufferings, when the receipt of her and Don Melchior's letters, enclosing one for her, told him of their double disappointment, and of her destitute state. Then without a moment's delay, he resolved to set out to join her, and to go at all risks into Spain, and bring Don Melchior to her. He did not tell exactly this extent of his intentions to his old master and mistress, but he swore to them that he would set out in search of their daughter, and that he would never return without tidings of her. His preparations were soon made. He took care secretly to forward a guitar, and some little portable luxuries, for Malvide; and providing himself with the before-noticed apt disguise for frontier travelling in such times, furnished with a passport, and more money than he could require, he set off, and journeyed night and day, until he arrived at the Cagot's hut, and threw himself—not unexpectedly, for she reckoned on his zeal—before his delighted and agitated mistress.

It may be well supposed that Felix did not linger long in the hut. Even had his own inclination prompted any loss of time, the exigency of the case would have overcome it. But he was anxious to be gone,

for he was a fellow of an adventurous spirit; he longed to mix in the strange company, to be looked for at the other side of the hills; and he felt proudly anxious to signalize himself in the service of his attached mistress, and of the gallant lover with whom her destinies were now for ever to be joined. A little time served for his scanty preparations—a hearty meal; a few hour's repose, his relics and amulets put in proper order, his false beard replaced on his chin, and his staff grasped firmly in his hand—and away he trudged across the mountains, followed by Malvide's anxious looks, which seemed to out-pace his steps, and would have penetrated the secrets of distance and time.

The adventures of Felix on this expedition, would have formed one of the most amusing of modern pilgrimages, had I room for such an episode. But I must slur over his meetings with the various curious characters which at that time abounded in Spain; the accidents which for many days retarded his main object; his falling in with Father Munoz, whom he immediately recognised as Don Melchior's old friend; and his rencontre with the villain Sanchez, who, in his presence, and deceived by his professed opinions, avowed to the monk his intention of murdering Don Melchior, and set out for his quarters, under a treacherous semblance of patriotism, to effect his purpose. To prevent it, however, two obstacles were in the way—Father Munoz's and Felix's disapproval. The strange circumstances of this gratuitous villany revived all the old warmth of the monk's attachment; and he immediately despatched Felix, furnished with passes of security against the outrages of the Royalists bands, to outmarch the intended assassin, and put Don Melchior on his guard. He entered fully into Felix's confidence, who told him not only of the continued attachment of his old friend for Malvide, but entrusted him with the secret of her present retreat, certain that, in the result of any accident to Don Melchior, the Monk would use all his powerful influence for her protection. Felix little knew the chord he touched on, when he sounded the praises of Malvide; and the only return asked by Father Munoz, for his solemn promises of protection to that dear object, was a profound secrecy, as to his having been informed of her circumstances and situation.

Felix thought that was the least return he could make for so important a protection, and being discreet as well as zealous, he never violated his promises to the monk; and neither Melchior nor Malvide, knew the guardian that protected the latter, during a lawless and hazardous interval, until Father Munoz informed his friend of the fact, and allowed me an opportunity for knowing, how far I too had shared in the safety secured to the hut, by his peremptory orders for its inviolability.

The marches and countermarches perpetually employing Don Melchior and his fellow pursuers of the fugitive fanatics, made it a difficult matter for the pretended pilgrim to come into actual contact with him. The object was at last attained. He found Don Melchior; warned him of the projected attempt against his life; informed him of the situation of her, for whom alone he thought that life worth preserving; and bearing a hasty but eloquent letter from the gallant soldier to his faithful mistress, with instructions for the formation of a miniature telegraph, and signals for its use, Felix once more bent his steps towards the secret hold of the lovers, and never paused in his career, until the

very evening when I so unexpectedly formed one of the party among whom he alighted.

The march of circumstances from that moment has been, I hope, as clearly as it was truly traced. I have made my recital of previous transactions bear mainly on points of immediate interest to my heroine. Any oversight in those little dovetailings which make a narrative more perfect, will be readily dispensed with for the attainment of my straightforward object, of coming to the situation of chief importance, in what I have chosen to denominate, like the rest, *a tale*. And I now resume the narrative of events, at the place where I again became an actual observer of them; feeling all the relief, which one naturally experiences in getting rid of a second-hand story, and having only to deal with such facts, as one can vouch for on one's own authority.

CHAPTER XVII.

The general reader can scarcely imagine the hesitation with which writers record events arising from, or connected with their personal adventures. Every occurrence out of the common track has an air of fiction or improbability, and every character at all uncommon, is considered out of nature. But a little reflection would remove many of those impressions. The very facts that *on paper* always look so unreal, are in every day life perpetually happening around us; and many a scene performed by our own circle, or in which we take a part, only want to be printed, to make them pass the bounds of belief. The fact is, that it is the fewness of those varied passages of life which are recorded, that gives to them this apocryphal air. Were a thousandth part of the *living* romances of the time to be given to the world, those inventions which have staggered credulity, would be pronounced tame and insipid, and all would declare that every one can vouch for from his own experience, that *romance* is the mere common place of life, and, like some of the general phenomena of nature, is incredible only to those who do not examine into that which forms the very essence of their own being.

I have been led to say this much, from the rather singular nature of the circumstances which combined to give a tone of what may be considered the marvellous, to the situations in which fate had placed the chief personages connected with the story I am telling. Both the persons and the events are certainly somewhat out of the track of ordinary affairs, and it is of course for that reason, I have chosen to record them here; but I trust that my readers will not return to their actual presence now, with the less sympathy, for knowing that they were subject to the same kind of influences, which have most probably, some time or other, chequered the life of every individual reader, who may cast a line of thought into the fathomless depths of memory.

Don Melchior, it will be recollected, was fast recovering from his

wound, under the skill of the monk, and the attention of Malvide. The particulars of their by-gone days which I have sketched, were gleaned chiefly during the interval between the attempted murder of my hero and his convalescence. When Malvide acquired, in the certainty of her lover's safety, a little portion of her natural gaiety, she used often to revert to the strange circumstances of her Cagot disguise, and the semblance of half-idiotcy and deformity, which she was forced to wear; to her early fears of my being leagued in some way with her friends or Melchior's enemies; to her recovered confidence, and again recurring apprehensions on the visit of Serjeant Passepartout, and the murderer—from the mention of whom she shrank. As for me, I at times doubted the identity of the person who now conversed with me so freely. I felt often as if something was wanting to the reality of the scene; as if the hut was but half furnished with its stock of mortal moveables, and that the lumping, hooded, and fantied ugly girl *should* be there, to make all real and right. More than once did Malvide gratify my somewhat skeptical anxiety, by arranging her capulet as she was wont to do in her disguise, and sportively mimicking *her own* voice and gesture—and I have been startled, while she limped before me, as though I gazed on the accurate likeness of some well known but unpleasant object. Her hood thrown aside, and her beauteous face beaming out, I was again both satisfied and contented as to her identity.

Nothing could exceed Melchior's surprise, at the free avowal which Father Munoz made to him of the cause of his mysterious disappearance and temporary abandonment of the world. He could scarcely credit the possibility of his friend's boyish passion for Malvide; and still more did it appear impossible that it could yet linger in the breast which had undergone such thorough revolutions of passion and feeling, such total change of sentiment, and which now beat with emotions so wide of that one. If even Melchoir was skeptical on a point which involved deep adoration for the object of his own idolatry, well might my readers be so—but they will perhaps admit the strong hold taken of the heart by a first passion, and acknowledge, with a conscious sigh, the spell it casts over the mind, which new scenes, new sentiments, new fortunes, new worlds cannot dissolve.

Malvide was still more astonished at this revelation, which it was absolutely necessary to convey to her, to account for the monk's repugnance to another meeting with her. Her incredulity, however, can be believed by those who comprehend the delicate texture of a truly modest mind, conscious of its purity, but ignorant of its worth. When she was at length convinced by the solemn assurances of her lover, strengthened by my poor confirmation, of the real nature of Father Munoz's feelings, she fled from almost the sound of his name: so little was she gratified at this triumphant proof of her external charms, and so still less desirous of confirming it by a display of her mental excellence.

But notwithstanding all this mutual motive for avoidance, Malvide and the monk were about to have one meeting by their joint consent, and one of a nature fit to shake to the very foundation the structure of self-denial which *he* at least had been raising.

Don Melchior, on the very first day of his being sufficiently recover-

ed to move out of the hut, and with all the delicacy which the subject required, told Father Munoz of his and Malvide's anxious desire that a marriage should be immediately solemnized between them, such as would bind them by religious contract, although under present circumstances no legal ceremony could possibly take place. The delicacy of Malvide's situation, or, as *she* felt it, the indelicacy, inevitable as it was, made this step imperative; and it became the more urgent, from the fears of both herself and Melchior, that were not such a bar thrown in the way, the obstinate parents might discover their retreat, and at any moment tear them asunder. Once, however, joined together by the ties of religion, they would possess a guarantee for safety that no resentment would venture to violate. Malvide might without reproach or scandal, devote herself to her sacred duties towards him, who would be then in the sight of heaven her *own*—while the promptest measures might be taken to tie the legal knot which would make her wholly his.

All this was put plainly and calmly, but forcibly by Melchior to his friend; and he ended with a request that the monk would consent to sanction the measure, and nominate some one from among his struggling brethren to officiate on the occasion.

Father Munoz listened composedly and unmoved; and when Melchior had finished speaking, he said in a dignified and solemn tone,

"I have listened, my friend, with attention, but I had anticipated all you meant to say. Could you have supposed me so indifferent to your happiness—to *her's*—as not to have weighed well every circumstance of your present situation? You believe me oppressed with thoughts of more magnitude, but I have yet room enough left in my mind for considerations which embrace your happiness. My personal views are beyond this world, but I still possess feelings for its affairs, when the weal of others is at stake. Witness the contents of this girdle, this sabre, these copies of correspondence, this form, worn already by fatigue, a constitution breaking fast!—Yes, Melchior, your welfare is dear to me, and I have not forgotten it. I enter into all your thoughts, and am ready to aid your wishes; nor shall you seek a stranger to perform the most important action which involves your happiness. I will unite you with Malvide! At the altar of God I will meet her, with feelings of subdued yet undiminished strength; glowing with a flame as bright and pure as the incense that shall burn before me; and mounting up, like it, an offering to heaven, while I perform a double sacrifice, worthy a Christian priest, and fitting a sinful man!"

Against this decision of the priest there was no appeal; his manner had a stamp of authority upon it that prevented dissent, and silenced opposition; and even Melchior, his conqueror in the field, felt an undescribable sense of awe, while singly in the presence of this strange being, whose influence seemed to extend to all who came in contact with him. This unexpected arrangement was communicated by Melchior to Malvide; and she, although with feelings of infinite constraint, consented. I was informed of Father Munoz's determination, by her and Melchior jointly; and to me was left the management of the exterior matters leading to the ceremony, which was fixed for the morrow.

To give as much solemnity as possible to the marriage, it was deci-

ded that it should be performed in the chapel of the Virgin, in the Vale of Heas, before noticed. Don Melchior's weak state made it necessary that he should be carried there, in the easiest kind of litter to be hastily constructed; and to secure as much respectability as was consistent with secrecy, and the limited extent of present connexions, it was settled, that the duty of giving away the bride should devolve on Serjeant Passepartout—my religion incapacitating me from such an important task. I was depu'ted to make the communication to my friend the serjeant, and I immediately crossed the ravine to his quarters, to lose no time on my mission.

When the serjeant saw me scrambling up the roughest and shortest path, but which was not till I was almost close to the rock on which he sat reading, he started up and rushed towards me, dashing down his book, and wiping his eyes with his black silk night-cap, which he hastily took from his head for that purpose, and to salute me at the same time.

"Good evening, Serjeant," said I, puffing for breath.

The serjeant seemed as much out of wind as myself, for he squeezed my hand and sobbed, but did not speak.

"Why, what's the matter?" said I; "you are not ill, I hope?"

"No—nothing—never mind—not at all ill—" answered he, with averted face—"not ill, but *sacre peste!* these fellows have no right to sport with one's feelings in this way!"

"Who? What? Pray explain," said I, anxiously.

"I *can't* explain," replied he—"don't you see I can't? Curse this sensibility of mine, it plays the very devil with a man's comfort—but then the women like it"—added he, looking full in my face, with a brisk and smirking expression on his; "they like it, depend upon it they do; and this very fellow, this Racine here, with all his poetry, could not make his way faster to a female heart by writing his verses, than I could by weeping over them. Yes, I am not at all ashamed of it; I have cried myself sick, (blowing his nose fiercely) ay, quite sick of the sorrows of this dear Iphigenie (taking up the book,) and my tears dry up again as if a furnace blew its blast over them: such is my indignation at the cruel brute of a father who would have sacrificed her. And as to that Achilles, my own namesake, a brave soldier though, we must allow that, he'd have fought the devil to give him his due; but if he had had a friend like me in all Aulide, he'd have carried the girl off, in spite of every impediment, and I'd have helped him! Ay, may I perish if I would not have married them myself!"

I could scarcely avoid taking off my hat, and making a low bow to the memory of Racine, for having so opportunely worked up the feelings of the serjeant, to suit the very purpose I had in hand. I saw that he was in the vein, and I lost no time in coming to the point. A very few words sufficed to state the object of my visit, and in a fewer still he gave his delighted consent to perform the part assigned him, winding up with a prayer for the happiness of the intended bride, as fervent as if he had been her father a thousand times over.

I returned soon to the hut, recounted the success of my application, helped my friends to a laugh on the strength of the serjeant's heroics,

and employed the rest of the evening in preparing the "order of the procession for the morrow."

The morrow came, and a bright sky and clear atmosphere smiled propitiously on the day. Don Melchior felt a whole month's amendment to have resulted from the happy feelings of one night. He arose early, assisted by his faithful soldier servant, who with one of his comrades formed the whole *suite* of the late commander of so many hundreds.

He was cheerful and looked well, and Malvide was a living emblem of the best feelings of the mind acting on an enlarged and lofty spirit: her bearing was suited to the importance of the day. She looked conscious of the serious station she occupied; but the tender sentiments which filled her heart, gave her an air of blended dignity and softness, which was at once striking and soothing. I, accompanied by the monk, arrived early at the hut from Gedro; Serjeant Passepartout, with four of his men, soon joined us, and after the form of breakfasting was gone through by the chief actors in this scene, we prepared for our descent into the valley where the chapel stood.

Father Munoz abstained from entering the hut, or having the gratification of speaking to his friend, so scrupulously did he avoid the possibility of meeting with Malvide, until on the steps of the altar, he might safely trust his eyes with the sight of those matured and cultivated charms, which in their very opening had so inflamed his youthful mind, and even in his late unexpected meeting with them, while shrouded in the semblance of death itself, had shaken his heart to its inmost depths. He therefore lingered at the foot of the hill, in sight of the hut, and ready to precede our advance as soon as we set out.

In a very little time we were on our march. Don Melchior lay on a kind of couch, composed of mattresses and bolsters, placed on branches of pine, and carried at arm's length by Serjeant Passepartout's kind-hearted soldiers, who were relieved at intervals by Don Melchior's servant and his comrade. The narrowness of the paths made it impossible for Malvide to walk beside her lover, as she two or three times at, tempted; but she followed close to his litter, leaning on my arm; while Serjeant Passepartout, with a solicitude at once respectful and *paternal*, kept as close to her as possible, with an expression of fatherly importance and gravity on his countenance, quite suited to the solemnity of the office he was prepared to fulfil.

Descending at a gentle yet steady pace, and only halting occasionally for a few minutes to rest the bearers, we soon reached the level ground of the valley, and led by the monk, we arrived at the ponderous rock,* which I have before noticed, and there following the example of our holy guide, a short pause was made, and all the party knelt—those who felt it a duty—saying a short prayer to the Virgin, (who, as tradition testifies, once honored this rock by her appearance upon it) and such of us as were skeptical, going through the ceremony from courtesy to our companions.

Once more in movement, the chapel of our Lady of Heas soon appeared to us situated in the oval depth of the circus which termi-

* This rock measures nearly 2,000 cubit feet.

nates the valley. The desolate majesty of this temple is amazingly impressive. Encircled by abrupt and barren mountains, it stands in its solitude, as a type of religion amidst the desert asperities of the mind; and softening by its benignant influence the rude sublimities of nature. The situation of this elegant structure in the midst of chaotic creation, brings the contrast of nature and art more home to the mind than any illustration I have ever witnessed—and had I not matter to dwell on, pregnant with greater interest to me, I might add some of my own vague reveries on the subject of poetical susceptibility, to the vapory speculations which the subject has already drawn forth.

A group of three or four men was standing at the porch of the chapel when it broke upon our sight, but on the approach of Father Munoz they retired into it, and the entire of our party soon reached the entrance. I was too much occupied with the observation of Malvide and Melchior, to pay a minute attention to the surrounding scenery. It made, however, a strong impression upon me, as bearing an aspect of most uncompromising savageness. The hollowed entrance of the amphitheatre showed the dried up bed of a lake, which, formed two centuries back by the bursting of a torrent, was, about forty years since, by a new phenomenon, swept dry at once, its waters rushing from it with terrific speed, and ravaging the valley as they forced their way along. When I looked around me in search of some spot of verdure, I only saw a scanty patch of herbage-ground, here and there among the crags, and even these showed the trace of a hail-storm of unusual fury, that had a fortnight before seared the fair face of vegetation, and scarcely left its vestige on the land. I turned from all this to the contemplation of the lover's sun-bright looks; but I felt, on entering the chapel, a spell of I know not what oppression, which I in vain endeavored to shake off.

The first objects that struck me within were not of a nature to lessen this feeling. Above twenty of the straggling vagabonds of "The Faith," were scattered in the church, leaning against the pillars, or lounging near the altar. Don Melchior and myself exchanged electrical looks, and at the next instant both our eyes turned on Malvide who suddenly became the color of death. A hurried glance showed me Passepartout's countenance, and it spoke displeased astonishment—but when my gaze fixed on the monk, as he stood with his back to the altar, I saw a calm and proud enthusiasm beaming from his face.

"'Tis nothing but chance," said I to Melchior and Malvide; "this is the natural refuge of those fanatics in their idle hours—be assured 'tis nothing of design."

Melchior shook his head, dissatisfied—but he pressed Malvide's hand fondly between his, and she smiled, and her cheeks recovered their natural coloring. The litter was now laid down, Melchior stood up from it, and leaning on my arm he walked up the aisle; and when we reached the altar steps, he knelt upon them and leaned against the railing for support. Malvide was close behind him; Sergeant Passepartout stood up erect, as though on parade; and I with the

French soldiers occupied a place at a respectful distance from the rest. Melchior's Spanish attendants stood like sentinels outside the chapel, and the soldiers of the Faith seemed carelessly to occupy themselves as before, regarding the rude representations of miracles and portraits of saints, daubed by some rustic artists on the walls.

I felt a delicacy that forbade me to pay too strict an attention to rites in which I might have been considered, in a sectarian point of view, to have no sympathy. I therefore neither looked nor listened too minutely, contenting myself with a passing glance of admiration at Malvide, whose simple robe of white muslin, fastened closely round her neck, assorted chastely with the ungarnished ringlets of her hair, and the natural blushes of her cheeks. From this lovely object my eyes wandered to the splendors of the altar, and its four richly wreathed columns, in the oval cavity behind which was enshrined the suspended figure of the Virgin herself, in all the holiness of paint and gilding, surrounded by angels of equal dignity; while the dove-like emblem of the spirit of life surmounted all, in clouds of pink and blue. Two minor altars flanked this principal one, and were severally decorated with pictorial anticipations of purgatory and the last judgment, in each of which the gross imagination of the artist had embodied the most revolting notions of bigotry and blasphemy. Such are the disfiguring mockeries that degrade this beautiful temple, and stifle the pure breathings of religion in their spurious atmosphere.

The monk had for some minutes spoken in a solemn tone—I know not in what form of words—and I saw that Melchior and Malvide were preparing to reply; but before either could utter a response, or speak the words that were to bind them together for life, Don Melchior's Spanish servant rushed into the chapel and with unreverential haste proceeded up the aisle. The monk looked, as I thought, astonished; and both Melchior and Malvide started up from their kneeling position, and listened eagerly to some whispered communication from the servant. Don Melchior looked surprise personified, while Malvide clasped her hands, as if delight was mixed with her wonder.

A bustle at the church door excited my attention; and looking in that direction, I perceived two of the inelegant sedan-chairs of the country, used for the conveyance of delicate or niling admirers of the picturesque, out of which an elderly gentleman and lady were coming. But a figure, rather incongruous to the solemn scene and its romantic associations, particularly struck me. This was a spruce, powdered, laced, and liveried lacquey, in that overdone grotesque costume which is so common, even now, amongst the old nobility of France. This fellow came capering up the aisle, with an air and smile that I thought familiar to me—but I was soon put out of doubt as to my imperfect recollection of him, by Malvide springing forward to meet him, with a frank and cordial manner, exclaiming, "Felix! Is it then you, indeed? And can it be possible that what I hear is the truth?"

"Yes, my dear Mademoiselle, that it is, if my worthy friend here, Antonio, understood my mumbling, and told you that the Vicomte and Madame are come to give you away."

Here, the confused surprise of Malvide and Melchior was completed

by the entrance of the Vicomte and Vicomtesse d'Esplandre. As they advanced into the church, a young man of simple mein, who accompanied them to the door, retired almost unperceived except by me; and I observed him to mount a horse which was held by an attendant, and gallop away at full speed.

In a moment Malvide was clasped in her mother's arms, from which she withdrew awhile, only to fly into her father's less cordial embrace. A scene of brief but most important explanation ensued, to lead to which it is necessary shortly to state the results of Felix's return to his master's chateau, after the night on which I made his acquaintance, and of his departure from the Cagot's hut, accompanied by his quondam associate, the vile Sanchez.

CHAPTER XVIII.

No sooner did the news of Felix's return to the chateau penetrate into the Vicomte's study and his wife's *boudoir*, than they both came out to meet the long expected messenger. There was an air of broken pride about the father, as if the disgrace rather than the loss of his child was most thought of. The mother bore all the evidence of sleepless nights and days passed in weeping.

Felix's first exclamation was, "She is safe!" and, without a word of reply to the rapid questions which assailed him, he produced Malvide's epistle to her parents, the rough sketch of which had caught my attention as it lay on the table in the Cagot's hut. In this letter she avowed the steps she had taken, in language of affectionate respect to those to whom she owed her being, but of firm devotion to him who now owed her first allegiance; she did not discover the place of her concealment, but expressed her anxiety to do so when she should receive an assurance that her parents would sanction her choice by their consent, and sanctify her nuptials by their blessing.

The unbounded joy of her mother on seeing the certificate of Malvide's existence, and having her safety confirmed by the assurance of Felix, led her into a hundred absurd but natural displays. The first feeling of her heart was delighted consent to Malvide's union with Melchoir; and she urged her husband to set off immediately with her, guided by Felix, to fulfil to the utmost their recovered child's desire. But the Vicomte did not travel quite so fast on this road to reconciliation. Satisfied that his child was safe, he required a little time for what he called reflection, but which was, in fact, stratagem. He made a fruitless effort to persuade Felix to betray the secret of Malvide's retreat, but this the honest fellow steadily refused to do. Finding this attempt unsuccessful, the Vicomte cogitated on the best

method to accomplish his design of regaining his daughter, and of still preventing her marriage with her plighted lover.

The Vicomte had, in his early intercourse with the world, obtained that little smattering of diplomatic guile which men of limited intellect consider tantamount to wisdom, because it enables them to deceive and overreach those gifted beings in whom talent leaves no room for the base chicaneries of mean minds. The Vicomte had *mystified* many a better man than himself, and he thought he ran no risk of failure in doing so now with so insignificant a personage as his own servant Felix, although he knew the fellow to be sharp and shrew. He succeeded amply in deceiving his wife, but Felix proved too cunning for him. When the latter was, after two days' expectation, summoned to receive his master's decision on the grand question of his daughter's happiness, he soon perceived that sincerity was the very farthest of all possible things from the Vicomte's mind. While he whined, and sermonized, and protested, his credulous wife bore the responses with a tone of earnest honesty, but Felix did not credit a single word his master said. He consented to forgive Malvide, and promised to go to her and formally hand her over to her lover's possession, to spare all reproaches, forget past differences, and give her a handsome marriage portion on the spot, and he demanded of Felix to tell the place of her retreat.

It was now Felix's turn to *diplomatize*. He professed his ample reliance on the Vicomte's sincerity, and his delight at the turn affairs had taken, and vowed, with great apparent candor, that he did not know the actual place where Malvide was concealed, but that he left her in a cottage in the neighborhood of Gedro, from which, however, it was most probable Don Melchior had removed her. To the Vicomte's question of whether he was ready to lead to the cottage where he left her, Felix answered that he was most willing but not quite *ready*, and he demanded two or three days' respite from the journey, with a well-invented and better told tale of an illness, the consequence of his late fatigues. This request was conceded, and the arrangements were concluded by an intimation from the Vicomte that, to give more seriousness to the proceeding, he would endeavor to prevail on Monsieur Depourvu, the rejected suitor, not only peaceably to abandon his claims on Malvide, but to consent to form one of the party, to give up in person all pretensions to her hand, and even attend the ceremony of its being bestowed on Melchior.

Felix thought this was widely overshooting the mark of probable obsequiousness on the part of even the simple Monsieur Depourvu; and, convinced that some treachery was intended, he was resolved to use every precaution to counteract it. The poor fellow was indeed sadly puzzled what to do, or how to oppose machinations which he did not even understand. He wished to write to Don Melchior and Malvide; but the uncertainty of affairs at the seat of frontier war made him abandon that plan. Father Munoz's quarters he thought more likely to be fixed, for he knew nothing of the ruinous attempt which the war-like monk had made, and which scattered him and his followers still more widely on the face of the earth. To the priest, therefore, he wrote, giving a full detail of the matters which were

passing at the Chateau d'Euplandre, warning him of the approaching arrival of the Vicomte and his party, and entreating the pious champion of church and state to devote his best energies to devising plans for the safety of the interesting, and about-to-be persecuted young lady, whom he had already promised to protect. This letter he forwarded by a trusty messenger, a sort of itinerant courier, who gained his livelihood by carrying on secret communications of this kind, and who safely delivered his despatches into Father Munoz's hand at the inn of Gedro, three days afterwards, late in the evening, when he and I returned from our attendance on Don Melchior at the Cagot's hut.

This step taken, Felix felt his mind in some slight measure relieved, but he still suffered great inquietude on the score of his own incapacity to avert the treachery which he feared to be impending over his dear young mistress. The time, however, approached for setting out, and he prepared to act as guide on the eventful journey, with a heavy presentiment of difficulty, danger and disappointment. When the party, consisting of the Vicomte, his lady, Monsieur Depourvu, and Felix, reached St. Sauveur, within a few miles of the vale of Heas, they were obliged to abandon the carriage in which they had travelled so far, as the road farther on was impassable, except for those who journeyed on horseback, on foot, or in the sedan chairs before mentioned. The arrangements for the remainder of the route were soon made, two of those conveyances being engaged for the old couple, and a horse for the young gentleman, while Felix was to precede the others with a staff in his hand, acting at once as guide and running footman.

Two things surprised and did not tend to satisfy Felix, during their short delay at St. Sauveur. The first was the appearance of six Gendarmes, an unusual sight in those parts, between whom and Monsieur Depourvu an intelligence very plainly subsisted, and next, to Felix's still greater astonishment, a Spaniard, evidently one of the ragamuffins belonging to the royal party, who lounged about the inn door when the carriage arrived, inquired the names of the party, and, giving a letter to the Vicomte, disappeared. Felix watched his master as he read, and thought he could discover a variety of emotions depicted in his face; but a short apparent struggle between them, ended in his ordering the men to advance as fast as possible to the chapel of the Virgin. They no doubt, supposing that they carried some pious and wealthy pilgrims, hastened onwards, and arrived at the end of their expedition, just in time as we have seen, to interrupt Father Munoz in the ceremony he had commenced.

When Felix reached the chapel, and heard from his late acquaintance, Melchior's servant, what was going on inside, he had no doubt that the note which was delivered to his master at St. Sauveur, was from Malvide; and that the pride of the father would not let him condescend to communicate its contents to him. His joy was boundless at the certainty which seemed to exist of the marriage being completed, and, as he rushed into the church, he quite forgot the six Gendarmes who had followed the party all the way from St. Sauveur, to the opening of the vale of Heas, where they halted; and

was totally unobservant of Monsieur Depourvu, having remounted his horse, and galloped off at full speed, as I have before described.

When Malvide's arms were loosened from her father's neck, and once more twined round her mother's, the Vicomte, with all the assumed dignity, which apprehension allowed him to muster, demanded "If the ceremony was indeed concluded?"

"No, Sir," said Melchoir, who had risen from his kneeling posture to advance towards the Vicomte, "no, luckily we are not too late to receive the honored sanction of yourself and my Malvide's mother, which alone was wanted to complete the happiness of this scene."

"Then stop, at your peril, I command it!" exclaimed the Vicomte, his harsh features assuming a more rigid expression. "This solemn farce must not be persevered in. Invalid and illegal before, it is now impious, when I, the father of this rash girl, in the very temple of God, protest against this violence."

"It is no violence, it is my own doing, go on—go on—and save me from my father," cried Malvide, throwing herself upon Melchior's neck, but addressing this supplication to the monk.

Munoz proceed! in the name of Heaven itself, I call on you"—cried Melchior—"you have begun the rites, let nothing now make you violate your duty—proceed—proceed!"

Here a scene of indescribable confusion ensued. The Vicomte loudly protested against the marriage going on; his wife fell down in a fit of violent hysterics: Malvide's sweet voice was raised far beyond its usual pitch, in passionate entreaties to Munoz to complete the rites—and Melchior used every persuasion to the same effect, with all the manly eloquence of which he was so much master.

Every one spoke at once; the lounging soldiers of the Faith, gathered round the altar, when the altercation was going on, and their hoarse voices murmured in gloomy tones. Melchior's servant joined his louder exclamations to the din. Serjeant Passepartout, who felt rather sore in being despoiled of his parental authority boldly opposed the real father of the would-be bride, and execrated the tyranny he was endeavouring to exercise: and, in the midst of all, Felix, who had recognized me, came up to the place where I stood, quite pale from agitation, and his teeth chattering together, and said, in a tone which seemed combined of grief and fear,

"It is too plain, I see it all; it is a plot between my master and that damned monk. What a fool I have been all through! It is all my fault, miserable dupe that I am!"

These words drew my attention to Father Munoz, and I observed him to look on all the bustle around him, with a countenance in which agitation, but of what kind, I knew not, was strongly depicted. He had suffered the clamour to proceed for a long time undisturbed; but at length, he raised himself up in his loftiest style, and elevating both hands, he called out in French, and in a tone that once extinguished the united din of all the others—

"Silence, and listen to me!"

This sound of authority, coming with all the force of a religious mandate, hushed the confusion at once, and every eye was turned with expectant anxiety towards the monk.

"Silence! nor let the walls of this holy place be profaned by this irreverend clamour. To you Vicomte d'Euplandre I chiefly address myself; with you this scandal has its origin. Cease your intemperate interruption, and let the ceremony proceed, which you yourself have sanctioned by your consent, and which you are now here by solemn notice to witness. No interruption, Sir," thundered he, with increasing vehemence, as the Vicomte gave a sign, and in that tone which a monarch might quail to. "This must not be, the holy rites have begun—the marriage is virtually performed—Heaven must not be trifled with, nor the church defrauded!"

A moment's pause allowed the Vicomte time for thought. He was recovering himself and preparing a reply, when a clatter of horses' hoofs, broke the stillness, and produced on all a strange variety of sensation. Malvide clung closer to Melchior; he, with exhausted frame and agitated look, held her to his heart. The father bounded with joy, and in bold defiance of the priest, exclaimed,

"Here they come! the armed police of the land, with the affianced husband of my daughter. No base adventurer like this shall be my son—no vagrant monk like you, shall dare dictate to me. Come in, come in, Depourvu, with the Gendarmes—quickly alight!" continued he, in his loudest tone.

"Close the door!" vociferated Munoz in Spanish, and waving his hand. The soldiers of the Faith sprang forward to do his bidding, but the Gendarmes were already dismounted and in the porch, and headed by Depourvu they came clattering up the aisle to the impatient calls of the Vicomte.

"Execute the law!" cried he, "seize on this daughter of mine, no longer worthy to be acknowledged as such—seize on her, Gendarmes!"

"At your peril lay hands on this lady," exclaimed Melchior, who looked terrors, but was evidently little able to act them, for he was so exhausted as rather to require Malvide's support than afford her any. Her courage and strength seemed to rise with the danger, and she stood firmly clasping her lover, as the Gendarmes approached them. The mother now spoke, and with an energy little to be expected from her former display, protested against this violent interference.

"I am her mother," said she, "and I refuse my assent to these proceedings. Her happiness is my first object, and I sanction her union with the man of her choice."

"Madame!" cried the Vicomte, trembling with rage, and seizing his wife by the arm, as if to shake her into submission.

"My dear, dear mother," said Malvide, loosening her hold of Melchior, and clasping the Vicomtesse to her bosom.

"What is all this?" vociferated the Vicomte, stamping on the ground; "am I to be baffled in this way by a pair of women and a monk? Gendarmes, do your duty! Depourvu, have you nothing to say?"

"Nothing! To be sure, I have a great deal to say," said the simple looking young gentleman rousing himself into a very choleric fit: "I am the worst used man in France—my heart is breaking—

the affections of the young lady are stolen from me, and her whole marriage-portion is—"

"Hush!" cried the Vicomte, putting his finger to his lips.

"Ay, it was my fortune you thought of!" said Malvide, in a bitterly contemptuous tone.

"No, it was not, Mademoiselle Malvide. It was your beauteous person—for when I thought you had drowned yourself, I dragged the fish-ponds for your body, all the same as if you had never refused me."

"Wretch!" muttered Malvide.

"And look here," continued he, pulling out a roll of parchment from under a short riding cloak, and opening it out at considerable length, "look here, Mister Monk, and you gentlemen all," turning to Passepartout, myself, and the rest; "here is our contract of marriage, drawn out on vellum, beautifully embellished, and signed, in the first place, by the king himself; what do you think of that? then by Prince T., the Duke of D., the Marquesses of F. and G., eighteen counts and barons, and a list, too long to read to you, of the first royalist names in France! Now Mademoiselle, what can you say after that?"

An appealing look accompanied this expression; but Malvide did not condescend to return the one, or reply to the other.

Here Serjeant Passepartout, who had been suffering all the agonies of a prattler, wishing to edge in a word, hemmed and hawed, and drawing himself stiffly up, began with an air of mock authority.

"I really must beg to interpose at this stage of this extraordinary affair. In virtue of the character I have undertaken to fulfil, in right of my authority as the giver-away of this amiable and lovely young lady—"

"In right of what?" exclaimed the Vicomte, with a petrifying glance at Passepartout.—"Giver-away!—you!—and who the devil are you, sir!"

"I, sir? I, sir, am Victor Achilles Passepartout, serjeant in the — the infantry of the line, who have served my king and country—and I would have you to know, Monsieur le Vicomte"—

"Silence, sir," interrupted the father; "how durst you presume to meddle with my affairs—to break in upon the peace of a noble family, and abet such infamous conduct as the Spaniards are engaged in? Depend upon it, Mister Sejeant, your colonel shall know of this, and you shall dearly repent it. Giver-away, indeed! Gendarms, do your duty—seize on my daughter! At your peril, delay no longer—you are here especially for that purpose—here is the perfect's authority!"

This tone of pride and menace shrivelled up the growth of the serjeant's importance. He shrunk behind me, pulling up his shirt collar, and muttering very fierce, but rather indistinct retorts; while the gendarms reluctantly set about in good earnest, obeying the order so peremptorily given, and justified by the magistrate's written warrant. Felix kept all through the scene, wringing his hands and exclaiming to me,

"A plot, a plot, a vile plot between my master and the monk!"

You'll see how it will end—treachery and villany from top to bottom—a plot, a plot, a plot!"

I was, for my part, a silent spectator of this most curious business; I felt all the awkwardness of my situation, but did not think it possible to better the concerns of those I was so much interested for, by an interference that might have only embarrassed myself. I preferred lying quietly by, until some opportunity might offer of being really of service.—Besides, I could not help (despite of Felix's denunciation,) having considerable reliance on the good faith and determination of the monk. A natural objection to think ill of persons I had once esteemed, an inclination rather to wait for being deceived than suspiciously to anticipate, influenced me on this occasion, as it has done on many others through life, to my cost! I, therefore, watched with an anxious but not impatient curiosity for the next speech of Father Munoz; and at last it burst forth in his own peculiar manner.

"This sanctuary is profaned—the church is braved—her minister insulted—her rights trampled on! Gendarms, I warn you, that you are about to commit a mortal sin! As for you, gentlemen, I shall feel it my duty to curse you from this holy place, if you dare persist."

This much was said in French, but it produced little effect, except in causing a frightful paleness to overspread Depourvu's countenance. But the Vicomte urged on the gendarms, and they were on the point of seizing Malvide, and snatching her from the arms of her mother and lover.

"Then, since words are of no avail," cried Munoz, in the high sounding diction of his native tongue, "since religion is scoffed and its temple defiled, soldiers of the Faith, champions of the church, children of God do your duty!"

With these words, he drew from beneath his cassock his gleaming sabre, and, at the signal, full twenty long-bladed knives started from their scabbards, in the hands of the hitherto careless and inactive Spaniards.

"Now who dares oppose my orders? Go on, my gallant friends," cried Munoz, his military ardor overcoming all religious feelings, except that of *domination*. The remainder of the assemblage seemed paralyzed by the prompt obedience of the Spaniards, who immediately set about the work they were evidently prepared for. Pushing aside the gendarms, they approached Melchior and Malvide, and gently sizing him, they laid him on his litter, and carefully bound him down with cords, which they carried about them. Four of them raised him up—two others advanced towards the door, while the remainder formed a rank, at each side of the litter, keeping the Vicomte, Depourvu, and the gendarms outside of the lines, but admitting within them Malvide and her mother, who both staid close to Don Melchior, and endeavored to pacify his rage at this proceeding.

The whole thing was done so suddenly that neither Passepartout, Felix, or myself had time to exchange observations.

"Now onwards to the frontier!" cried the monk, in Spanish, to his men, "bear your prisoner safely! And, gentlemen," continued he, speaking in French, "it is thus I terminate this disgraceful scene."

Married or single, this rebel Spaniard is my prisoner—I take him in the name of my King, although on neutral ground, and I hope your monarch will bear me harmless—for it is no time for standing on nice points. Had the ceremony been completed, his wife would have been my prize as well, for an old law subjects all women married within a league of the frontiers to the allegiance of their husbands,* but having been grossly interrupted, this lady is free to abandon Don Melchior, or to follow his fate. Let her decide quickly, for we must not lose time.

"He is my husband—I will follow him to whatever fate your treachery may doom him—lead on!" exclaimed Malvide, in broken and suffocating accents.

"She shall not go—I will tear her from his side! Gendarms, do your duty!" cried the Vicomte; but as they made a movement, as if to seize Malvide, once more Father Munoz waved his hand, and a dozen knives were held out, so as quite to intimidate all opposition, and Malvide walked beside the litter, which was now carried on at a brisk pace, the monk following in martial triumph.

The Vicomte caught his wife firmly, and held her back from her daughter's hurried embrace. Passepartout stood steadily with his four men, having no regret for the Vicomte's defeat, puzzled at the monk's conduct, but determined to observe a strict neutrality in this strange proceeding. I went on, resolved to follow the fortunes of Melchior and Malvide, as long as I was permitted. Felix swore vehemently that he too would go with Malvide and watch over her to the last; and, as we all left the church, I saw the Vicomte stamping and foaming with fury, while Depourvu tremblingly applied a smelling bottle alternately to his own and the Vicomtesse's nose.

CHAPTER XIX.

Once out of the chapel, the party moved on at a rate which kept Malvide almost breathless, and gave Felix and myself enough to do to keep up with them. We had, however, proceeded but a short distance, when the monk contracted his strides, his men did as much by their's; and one of them, obeying the orders of his chief, approached a hut which stood a little way from our path up the mountain side; from which he soon descended, leading a small horse, with a rude saddle formed of goat skins, and a rope serving as an apology for a bridle. Upon this animal Malvide mounted, and the whole party was again in motion, following the course of the valley to the north east, and soon passing the opening of the vale of Estaube, and leaving behind the hideous crags which form the bounds of its solitude.

Turning suddenly round the shoulder of the most northern of the

*My readers need not search for this law, for the monk acknowledged the mention of it to have been a ruse.

chain of hills that skirt the valley of Heas, we soon crossed a little river which flows rapidly down to join the Gave at Gedro: and we were quickly on the ascent leading to the desert mountains between Pie Long and Neon Vielle. Felix and I kept at some distance behind the monk, who was himself always about a hundred yards in rear of the main party. Melchior and Malvide were thus unobstructedly left to their own converse, for the rough Spaniards were mostly, if not all, ignorant of French, and at any rate they evidently showed no inclination to interrupt their prisoner in any communication with his fair companion.

When they had got some way up the ascent, and were on the point of entering a defile which would shut out completely the view of the country we had been in so long, Father Munoz made a signal to his men, and they obeyed it by halting and laying down the litter. He then turned round and beckoned to me. I answered his silent summons by stepping briskly forward; and Felix accompanied me, although with no good-will to the monk, against whom he had continued to pour a torrent of reproachful abuse from the moment we quitted the chapel. We were very soon close to Munoz, who silently walked onwards, we beside him, until we reached the place where the litter was deposited on the heath, with Malvide, who had dismounted, kneeling beside it.

"So, Munoz, was this well done?" cried Don Melchior. "How can you come before me, and brave my reproaches? Could I have suspected you of this baseness!"

"What, Melchior!" said the monk, in a tone of infinitely more sprightliness than I had yet heard from him, and with an awkward air of humor in his manner, "What! Is it you that speak thus? Is this the clear-sighted, clever, intelligent, Melchior de Trevazos? I should rather have taken it for that fish-pond searcher, Depourvu. And do you really believe me treacherous? Did you not comprehend the stratagem, which alone could have saved you in the crisis of your fate, and that of her who is, in my eyes, your wife? Come, Melchior, rouse yourself, and, with loosened cords, know no bonds but hers!"—With these words, he cut the ropes which had held Don Melchior down.

"Is it possible!" cried the latter, rising up, "you are indeed a man of mystery—but pardon my dulness, Munoz; accept my grateful thanks, my best friend."

"Extraordinary, noble man!" exclaimed Malvide, throwing herself at Munoz's feet, and catching his hand which she pressed to her lips with warmth. But this was too much for him. He started, trembled, snatched his hand away, and turned abruptly to the other side of the narrow path, where Felix, who was working himself into a fit of astonished atonement, dropped on both his knees, and holding his hands up in the attitude of prayer, begged the priest to forgive his suspicions, and inflict the severest penance which such unholy misgivings merited.

Father Munoz extricated himself from this importunate penitent, (whose very sudden fit of piety did not last long,) and recovering

from the more embarrassing acknowledgments of Malvide, he addressed Melchior again, but with much greater gravity than before.

"Yes, my friend, you may be satisfied of my constant fidelity to you. I could not, if I would, betray you. A strong principle of duty binds me to your interest now, and I will see you *both* safely through this intricate embarrassment. My political feelings, my religious duty, are all apart from these sentiments of private and personal regard. I know you now only as Melchior, my old college friend—I forget that you are my opponent in public life, and have been my conqueror in the field. Rely on my acting up to this!—and now to the immediate danger which may press upon you. The Vicomte and his expected son-in-law will not rest here, depend upon it; some effort to overtake us, and get possession of your bride—for such she is, or at least shall be—will be immediately made. This must be averted. I spoke of the frontiers; and this route on which we now are, would lead to the pass of Bielsa, towards which they will no doubt suppose us to have gone, as the nearest entrance into Spain. There, however, we cannot attempt to go. Your late wound, and this present agitation, forbid the exertion, and you would not, I must believe, entrust this fair treasure into the perils of frontier warfare, where you could not protect her, and where neither I nor these gallant fellows could at present venture."

"'Tis all too true," said Melchior; "but in this impossibility, what is to be done?"

"To seek some secure retreat—and *such* I know of—and to deceive our pursuers, if they become such—and *that* I can accomplish. But first," continued the monk, "let me briefly explain, what may have appeared treacherous, and even still, perhaps, looks doubtful, in my past conduct."

We all listened with attention—but none gaped so wide as Felix. Father Munoz continued:

"Well, then, when, two days back, I received the letter from this worthy follower and trusty friend of yours (Felix smiled contentedly,) announcing the Vicomte's consent, and the approach of himself and the lady's mother, I resolved to be, as I told you on the very day I got the letter, myself the solmenizer of your union. I did not at first listen to the fears of treachery expressed by Felix—(Felix nodded his head, in approbation of his own sagacity) and I wrote to the Vicomte last night a letter, announcing the place and hour fixed for the marriage, which I sent by one of my followers to await his arrival at St. Sauveur, and which as it appears was safely delivered. I there used every expression which could conciliate him, and held you up, my friend, in the tone you so well merited. Still some misgivings came slowly across my mind. I read again the letter of Felix—I recollected what he had told me, during our interviews in Spain, of the Vicomte's hostility to the match—I put together what I had learned from you of this harsh father's character, and what I had, in days gone by, heard of it from his neighbors—and I resolved to be on my guard, and prepared for whatever might compromise your happiness, and the lady's safety. I therefore, as you have seen,

revealed somewhat of the affair, to this troop of devoted followers—I reckoned on them, and gave them my orders. You have seen their conduct—that speaks for them. But I determined to give the Vicomte every fair chance, and I purposely concealed his coming from you and *her*, that the surprise might be more delightful if he were sincere, and the measures of opposition wholly *my own* should he prove false. I have no more to add—I leave my conduct to your candid consideration. I have taken all upon myself—no suspicion of previous concert can attach to you. No law has been violated but that of neutrality, and you alone have a right to complain of me; but I trust to your forgiveness,” and a faint smile accompanied his words, as Don Melchior pressed his hand in his.

“My mention,” continued he, “of the frontier law, relative to the allegiance of women married on the limits, was mere invention, to give a better color to the apparent treachery which I strove to affix to my own conduct. That was, like the assertion of my design against you, Melchior, a falsehood—I confess it—but these only means of procuring your safety, and insuring that which alone makes it worth your having, will be justified, I believe, by the end which I hope to accomplish.”

We will not stop to debate on the monk’s morality; my own went hand in hand with his, in this affair; and I joined my warm approval to the reiterated expressions of gratitude which burst from Melchior and Malvide, re-echoed in loud applauses by Felix, whose bearing on the occasion accorded with the promise of his name.

“Let our measures be prompt then,” cried Melchior. “I shudder at the thought of violence being used against this dear object, whom, alas! I cannot now defend. What is to be done? I trust all to your energy and foresight, Munoz—pray decide at once.”

“My decision has been some time made,” said the monk. “We must here divide the party. Four men alone must remain with you, enough to bear you along, and almost too much to avoid observation, even in the wilds you are about to traverse. I, with the remainder, will take this southward path towards the pass of Bielsa. An imitation of your litter shall be borne along, so as to deceive those who may follow us. You and your bride must, under the guidance of these four brave and faithful fellows, proceed direct to the caves of Sarrancolin, where you can without risk await my coming. Trust to my joining you ere many hours break into the night. To our worthy Felix I would suggest his rejoining his master and the simple tool of his tyranny. He can accomplish two desirable objects, the tranquillizing of the mother’s mind, and, by the exercise of his inventive talents, detaching, if possible, the baffled Depourvu from the party of the Vicomte, and leading him into our toils in the caverned solitudes of Sarrancolin. Once there, I can conceive it easy to persuade him to become not only a witness but a party to your marriage, which must *there* be completed in one of those subterraneous wonders of nature, which want but consecration to give them the solemnity of the most labored temple worked of art. What say you, Felix: will you undertake the task?”

“Yes, that I will—and trust to my imagination for inveigling the

young gentleman. I am ready to start on your reverence's mission, but how must I find out the caves of Sarrancolin?"

I will be your guide to them," replied Father Munoz; "and you must meet me at nightfall, or a messenger whom I shall send to conduct you to me, here on this very spot, whence, by quick travelling, we shall reach the place in a few hours. I will look for you here, Felix, at six o'clock—and I hope, if your ingenuity does not forsake you, that you will be accompanied by Monsieur Depourvu."

"Well then," said Felix, "since time is precious, and suspicion must not be excited, I shall now go to rejoin the Vicomte and his party, to whom I must say that I have been driven back from my attendance on Mademoiselle, by your reverence and your Spaniards, who were crossing the frontiers with their prize."

"Exactly so," said Munoz; "and now for your English friend—what says he? Is he tired of this adventurous affair, or will he go through with it till its close?"

"I shall certainly not abandon my friends in this moment of doubt and difficulty," cried I; "and, if they permit me, I shall join my feeble aid to that of their escort, and proceed with them to Sarrancolin."

Consent and thanks for this proposition followed as matters of course; and in a very short time we were all in route for our several destinations—the priest and his detachment, with their mock prisoner on his litter, winding along the mountain path towards the pass of Bielsa, and Felix trudging his way back towards the vale of Heas, where we could plainly distinguish the Vicomte and his party in serious conference.

As the monk and his men disappeared, and were seen again at intervals, and the party in the vale took their steady observation, we slowly proceeded on our way concealed completely from view, yet from the nature of the scanty woods we marched through, commanding for a while a perfect sight of the whole.

Never, I think did I observe the mountain range and the basements it sprang from, to more advantage than from that spot. The day was of that bright transparent kind which in these districts gives a distinctness to all objects, inexpressibly beautiful. There was none of the vagueness of mist which nourishes the abstract wanderings of mind in such a scene, but all was marked with the reality of nature's touch, and standing out in living evidence of its actual presence. Below me were the Vales of Estaube and Heas, dreary and desolate foundations, from which upsprung at once huge walls of granite, that formed the first gradation as the stupendous chain spreading far away from east to west. Mount Perdu heaved up its giant head, a cone thick covered with snow; and its vast and swelling sides displayed, in every varied aspect, rocks, woods, ravines, and all that the mind imagines of the wild and terrible. The surrounding mountains presented a mass of unbroken simplicity and grandeur. No shock of nature seems to have ever moved a blade of the bright herbage which smiles in perpetual verdure on their sides. A thousand varieties of, to me, nameless flowers sprinkled the foundation green, as if a shower of every-colored gems had fallen upon the

earth. Silver and gold and saffron, blue and crimson, in all their most delicate shades, were blended in rich coloring there. A stream ran through the nearest valley, in a bed of marble dazzlingly white. Of this, two cascades were formed, of singular beauty. The first fell from a considerable height, its light foam dissipating in a veil of mist, through which the dancing sunbeams formed arches of rainbow hues to grace their sport. The second of these waterfalls was still more striking. Its broad and limped sheet flowed smoothly to the verge of the marble blocks from which it fell. There, divided in its course by an enormous rock, one half dashed brawling on through the picturesque impediments with which nature loves to vary her creations; the other streaming down from the projecting ledge, in a bright and continuous flow, a height which I neither could nor would care to measure, and falling unobstructedly into the basin where these liquid twins were reunited, and whence they bounded on in a sinuous course, which the eye could not follow long. Pasturages, hamlets and scattered villages were all within my immediate view. In the distance, the long chain of blue and snowy hills formed limits to the sight, and a starting place for fancy's adventurous flights. No one concomitant was wanting, to make the situation perfect in its kind.

And how many thousands of our travellers, thought I—and I must repeat the thought—have never known these wondrous scenes!—travellers who have passed admiring days among the steaming crowds of cathedral aisles, the sumptuous fopperies of palace finery, the dark disgusts of gloomy catacombs, never tired of wondering at the works of men, but ignorant of these glorious master-pieces of the Hand by which man himself was made.

While I paused to look back upon this scene, the convoy had disappeared in the defile; and turning away at once from the objects I had too long gazed at, I plunged into the copse which led to tracts of a different aspect and character. I soon overtook my friends, and the sturdy fellows who silently and carefully bore Don Melchior along, with all that air of proud fidelity so distinctive of Spaniards, feeling themselves bound, by every honorable tie, to the service of the man whom a few days before they had ranked among their deadliest foes.

We went cautiously forward at a steady pace, the Spaniards making light of their burden. Malvide, who was now enveloped in one of the short mantles of the soldier guides, cheering Melchior by her affectionate devotion, and I, almost always a little behind, except when I at times insisted on relieving one of the bearers in carrying their gallant burthen.

Before nightfall we had passed the base of Neon Vieille, left Mount D'Arbizon far to our right, skirted Lake D'Esconbons, and crossed that species of isthmus which joins the Pic du Midi, to the southern mountains. A rapid path winds up the hills, and favors the descent at the other side. The *Cau de Spada*, a pointed and rugged hill which terminates this passage, is the last of the chain of savage rocks bounding at this side the dreary valley of Bastan, into which we now entered, and from which we commenced our ascent of the Tourmalet. We wound cautiously up the steep but well cut road

which leads up this boundary between the horrid desolation of Bar-tan and the smiling loveliness of the vale of Compan, the most fertile and pastoral district of the Pyrenees, and not exceeded in the world for the charms peculiar to regions like it.

As we descended the Tourmalet by its eastern side, the shades of night came on; and the moon, slowly rising before us through a sea of mist, showed the surrounding hills and vales in many wild distortions of their actual forms and scites, which would have made it impossible for one unaccustomed to mountain wanderings, at all hours and seasons, to recognise the scenes with which he might have formed a neontide familiarity. At times a lake, of as perfect mimicry as ever lived in the deception of a desert mirage, seemed to reflect the moonbeams, and was studded with islands, and diversified with isthmuses, bays, and promontories. The soft southern breeze which blew down from Spain, soon swept away the vapors that produced these effects, and a group of rugged and barren rocks stood bared to the astonished eye. The wildest transformations were thus at once produced by every shifting breeze, and belied almost as soon in magic change. But all of the party were used to these scenes. Even Malvide had often, in her former mountain sojourn, gazed delightedly at the freaks of elemental illusion; and turning fondly to her lover, she felt proudly sure that his affection knew no variations such as these.

The bubbling source of the Adour sent out its narrow stream to guide us through the valley upon which we now entered. We followed its course until we came to one of those mountain hamlets, the primitive construction of which makes us wonder at the artificial wants of man. Eight or ten of these low and little huts, in which the inhabitants have just room enough to eat and sleep, but the height of which seems to have been formed on man's very lowest measurement, looked brown in the moonlight with their moss-covered walls and faded thatch. A little court-yard enclosed each, surrounded by a rustic peristyle formed of trunks of pine trees, or long stones standing on end, and supporting a roof of turf, under which the cattle securely reposed. Every thing soundly slept, and we passed through the very centre of the hamlet, without disturbing aught whithin its limits. We struck off to the right, and stopped for a while at the foot of a rude wooden cross elevated on a heap of stones, to mark, not the spot where murder had polluted the soil, but where the honest mountaineers might kneel on ground that had been consecrated by many a pious orison. Here my brandy-flask, that constant garniture of my pocket on such expeditions, was emptied of its last drop, for the Spaniards had quite exhausted theirs; and here, poor Ranger, who was the silent companion of all my movements since I mentioned him so many chapters back, finished the last remnant of the provisions which I had managed to secure for his use.

Refreshed once more, we renewed our progress; and leaving the village of Grip to our left, we crossed, in a devious course, the green and cultured slopes which form the first pasturages of the valley of Campan. On casting a last look on the drowsy and moon-lit hamlet, my eye caught the enormous magnitude of the Pic du Midi, frown-

lag blackly down upon the pastoral scene, and threatening to crush it with an immediate fall.

Valley and hill were alternately traversed, until we passed the natural enclosure which contains the celebrated marble quarries of St. Maïle; and thence we entered, by a winding path, the pass which communicates between the valleys of Campan and Aure, in the latter of which stands Sarrancolin, the place of our destination. A deep, thick forest now received the path; and scarcely had we plunged into its eternal shades, when a straggling moonbeam, piercing the gloom, seemed to repose upon a rock carved into the form of an antique altar, from which gushed a stream: that was immediately lost, as it gurgled its way into the wooded solitudes around us.

The moon lit our path at intervals, and when we were again left in shade, the steady footsteps of our guides went on in equal security. My footing was not quite so sure; for the carpet which covered the wood and the desert patches that now and then intervened, was of a verdure so smooth that I frequently slipped, and should have fallen had I not given my attention to Malvi'e, whose pony I steadily held by his rude bridle, but rather supporting myself, than giving security to his safe steps.

As far as I could judge, in the insufficient light of the moon and stars, the fertile beauties of this forests could scarcely be exceeded by those untrodden deserts where all nature's liberality has been lavished. The immense height of the trees, the luxuriant thickness of their foliage, the profusion of climbing plants interlacing them together, the aromatic herbage in thick tufts covering the earth, altogether surpassed all my former experience of the munificence with which nature clothes those unfrequented retreats. Arrived at length at the summit of the hill which is thickly clothed by this forest, we came suddenly out upon a wild unsheltered desert, with not a shrub, and scarce a blade of herbage to cover the hard earth which forms the soil. Half an hour's walk led us again to a descent which had the advantage of a broad paved way, formed for facilitating the carriage of the trees, transported from the forest to the valley of Aure, into which this precipitous path descends.

A road of infinite beauty led us through a valley which seemed to combine all the varied charms of mountain scenery. I faintly distinguished the wooded sides of the hills which bounded the deep ravine to my left; I heard the river murmuring below; and imagination pictured the splendid gradations of the mountain masses, which I knew to rise up from the ground we trod, in all the sublimity of their nature. But I saw no more. The moon was now lost behind those very mountains; and we passed in silence and obscurity, close to the little town of Sarrancolin, without disturbing even the painful monotony of the watch dogs' baying howl, until the four supporters of Don Melchior's couch laid it gently down, on the sloping side of a hill, of safe and easy ascent; and, pointing to a narrow aperture almost overgrown by brambles, one of the men exclaimed,

"This, Senior, is the cave of Sarrancolin."

At the mention of this place, the promised bourn of her expectations, her fatigues, and disappointments, the place where the priest

had solemnly engaged to complete her marriage, and secure her happiness, Malvide could not restrain her feelings; but uttering a feeble scream of joy, she flung herself from her pony into Melchior's arms, and in a half expressed hysterical effort would have told him her delight at having reached a harbour of safety. But she could not speak, nor did her emotions require utterance.

"You are worn out, my Malvide, by the fatigue and anxiety of this eventful day. Compose yourself, my love—all our perils are now past—here begins our real happiness."

Don Melchior spoke these words in his most soothing tone; but there seemed to me an air of languid melancholy in his manner, and the effect of the whole scene was painful and oppressive.

"Had we not better enter," said I, "and seek some repose at least, since we are not likely to procure refreshment?"

"Now, Senior," said the former spokesman—"Who goes in first?"

"We will go together," said Malvide to Melchior, in an under tone, having sufficiently understood Spanish to comprehend the question.

"The lady and myself will enter together," replied Melchior.

"That, Senior, is impossible—that is to say, it is impossible to pass the gallery two together, and to descend into the cavern; it must be one at a time. His majesty and his confessor who are never separate, they say, should separate here or not see the cave of Sarrancolin. This is the true ground for a divorce (no disparagement to your Excellency's marriage,) for a conclave of cardinals could not keep a man and his wife from parting company, between the mouth of the cave and the verge of the precipice within."

The levity of this man's words and manner was not pleasing to any of us, but Malvide was evidently alarmed by it. She shuddered as she looked on the dark mouth of this sanctuary, which it seemed as if despair alone should enter, and she hung back as the soldier offered to take her hand and lead her in. I saw that this was no time to offend these fellows, in whose power we were so completely; so I stepped forward, and proposed entering first to try the fortunes of the way.

"Strike the light then," said the soldier, and one of his comrades immediately obeyed his orders, and a couple of short flambeaux, brought for the occasion, were almost immediately flaring within the cavern's mouth. At the moment of entering, I cast my eyes back upon the deep glen and the hills above, and I just saw the rosy tinge of light, which hovers over the mountain's verge at the opening of the dawn. In another instant I was in the porch of the subterraneous retreat, the wonders of which we were about to explore.

"Halloa! Who goes there? What's that?" cried one of the men, looking back into the brambles and brush-wood about the entrance. I stepped out for a moment, and heard a noise in the direction to which the man proceeded.

"The devil and hisimps!" exclaimed the Spaniard, "what do you think we have here, Pedro? Why, old Father Jose's mule, by the life of my saint, with all his housings and panniers, but all empty. How, in the name of the Virgin, could the beast have wandered here? Wherever his reverence is, he took care to take out the provision, at

any rate. Come here, poor fellow, come here, and let me tie you up to this branch, till we can come out again and put you on your road in search of your master."

Suiting the action to the word, he tied up the mule, and we returned into the gaping aperture.

CHAPTER XX.

The very commencement of the cave presented some difficulty. The pass was narrow, long and rough; and the man who preceded me set the example of groping on hands and knees. Like him I had a torch in one hand, for these necessary auxiliaries had been multiplied several fold. After proceeding in this way about twenty yards, we reached a sloping mass of crystal, six or seven feet high. Up this we scrambled, and found the place above less difficult of passage than we left behind. The space became now wider and higher, and opening to the right and left, showed the commencing wonders of the place. The stalactites, of the consistency of stone or crystal, are numerous and large, and of that amazing regularity in shape and size which would appear the effect of the most measured care in some well-skilled architect.

I looked round me, and saw that Melchior and Malvide, with the aid of the remaining men, had passed the first difficulties of the way, and were within the recess which I myself had reached. Malvide looked round, astonished, but evidently ill at ease. Suspicion was working within her sensitive bosom, and preparing her cheeks, which fatigue and agitation had already robbed of their roses, to receive the light of the torches, on a colouring that assorted with their lurid glare. She looked more like a pale victim in some heathen rite, than a bride in the hectic flush of mingled hope and fear. Don Melchior's exhausted appearance was in sad keeping with her's; and an inconceivable air of wretchedness pervaded the whole scene.

I inwardly execrated the inflexible father who caused this misery; and the whole system of political abuse which nurtured the obstacles of the happiness of this young couple. My thoughts flew back to all the circumstances of their chequered adventures; and reflections on the fanatical opposition to liberty, in which all their distress arose, led, by a natural gradation of thought, to the existence of the *Cordon Sanitaire*, by which all was protected and about to be abetted. Then Sanchez and his murderous weapon flashed before my mental vision—and my eyes fell upon the fierce counterparts in mien and dress of that arch villain, whose arms and knives might yet be turned to effect the purpose he had so nearly accomplished.

These were the irresistible workings of the mind's misgivings, and

the countenances of Melchior and Malvide were eloquent with the expression of a similar train of fancies.

The leader of the soldiers asked, "If we would now move on?"

"On!" exclaimed Malvide to Melchior, "shall we then go further into this desolate place?"

"Yes, yes, my love," replied he, "we must follow our guides—our protectors let me call them—and pursue the path which destiny has pointed out. Lead on, my friend, we are ready?"

The way became in a little time narrow, low, and difficult as before. We went slowly forwards, however, carrying from the humid walls a portion of their slimy coat, while droppings from the roof fell upon us, as cold as the icicles they came from. We at length arrived at the seeming end of this narrow passage, for no egress appeared, but a small cavity which gaped in the wall before us, several feet above the floor we trod on, and apparently almost as difficult to reach as to pass through.

Through this, however, the soldier said we were to pass. Malvide hesitated once more. Melchior again consoled, and endeavored to reassure her sinking spirits. I, as before, formed the forlorn hope, and Ranger crawled by me, step for step.

The man who had usually preceded me, now proposed that I should take his place, that he might the more readily assist in my upward movements, and prepare the ropes which were to aid in my descent from the inward precipice, alluded to before by the leader of the party. I accordingly laid down my gun, and climbed the sloping walls, and with some inconvenience passing through the aperture, I was soon enabled to stand up on a solid platform of rock, every thing beyond being thick gloom.

"Steady there!" cried the Spaniard; "advance three paces and you will be dashed to atoms."

Nothing more was wanting to arrest my steps. I stood steadily, holding my dog close to my foot, and he clung to me, as if instinct had warned him of the danger beyond. In a moment or two, the rough hand of the Spaniard appeared through the cavity, thrusting forward a torch which I gladly seized. As I held it above my head and shook it before me from the ledge of rock, its gleam was feebly lost in the thick atmosphere of the apparently immeasurable depths.

The Spaniard and one of his comrades successively joined me where I stood, and they carried a long rope, with various ingenious ties, rudely made, in which they proposed at once to encircle my body, preparatory to my swinging off the ledge into the chasm, at the bottom of which, they told me, was the place of final secrecy and safety.

My own sentiments and sensations being but of auxiliary importance in this record of adventures, in which I bore only a minor part, I will not dwell on those which I experienced on hearing this proposition. I freely confess that I started with some feeling, not of pleasure certainly; and a curdling thrill *did* seem to move my nerves. Treachery, violence, perpetual imprisonment, and secret murder, were combined in the flash of thought that gleamed through my brain. The monk's absence—my separation from Melchior—the possibility of a design against his liberty or life, and the expediency of putting me out of the way of its execu-

tion—Malvide's forlorn situation—and a dozen such harnessing reflections, all crowded upon me. My hesitation, however, was but of a moment. It was no time to temporize even with one's own fears; so I delivered myself up with a careless air, to the operations of those who looked like my executioners.

The rope was fastened well round my chest and under my arms, which were almost pinioned by the pressure. A torch was placed in one of my hands, with the other I firmly held the rope close above my head; the Spaniards placed their backs against the rock, in a projection of which another torch was stuck, they put their feet closely against the base of the rugged wall, and in an attitude of steady resistance to my weight, as it was to fall below, one of them called out,

"Now, Señor, spring fearlessly and wide."

My mind being wound up to meet what was indisputably dangerous, I felt all that condensed energy of nerve which invariably accompanies such a situation, be the danger what it may, and which gives a sort of wild sentiment of pleasure, totally undefinable. I venture to say that no man ever yet swung from off the ledge of this chasm, even in circumstances less adventurous than those I have described, without experiencing what I now attempt to tell of; and the many travellers who have shrunk from the appalling plunge, will at least be able to imagine the variety of sensations the thing was likely to produce.

As I took my last step towards the brink, Ranger put his fore-paws upon me, and whined as he looked up. I pushed him from me rather rudely with my foot, and I swung off into the thick air of the chasm. As I dangled downwards, the cord slipping gently over the edge of the platform above, a wild and plaintive whine sounded over my head—a loud howl succeeded—and in an instant more, I saw my faithful dog spring from the rock right down into the gloomy gulf. He struck against me as he fell—knocked the torch extinguished from my hand—and was lost to my sight and hearing both together.

I cannot tell the pang that I felt at that moment. To see my old and tried companion dashed to atoms, as it were, in the very act of proving his attachment, without my being able to move a finger for his safety, was torturing to a degree that may, I think, be conceived by any who ever had a favorite dog. Every thing seemed to swim round, and I thought I never should touch the bottom, which both the Spaniards swore I was close to, at the same time expressing with loud oaths their horror at the fate of my poor Ranger. They stood as close as possible to the edge, and, with their torch extended, strove to light the depths below. But, in vain; when I touched the bottom, all was impenetrably dark.

I groped cautiously about, on what was, to my surprise, a soft substance unlike earth, calling on Ranger; and I quickly felt his body, which I no sooner touched than his tongue performed its kindest salutation on my outstretched hand. He whined and barked with tones of elial delight; and, to my astonishment and joy, he next jumped upon me, covering me with caresses. While I was occupied in ascertaining with my hands that he had no broken bones, and wondering who it was possible for him to be unharmed, Melchior and Malvide had

safely reached the platform which I had just quitted, and I saw a rude chair, composed of part of Melchior's litter, which was broken up for the occasion, prepared by the soldiers for my heroine's and her invalided lover's easy descent. I spoke cheerfully from below, telling them that the danger was but imaginary, and promising to assist them as they came swinging down.

While I spoke, a rustling noise near me made me suddenly turn round, and I was instantly laid hold of by a pair of powerful arms, the person vehemently demanding, in Spanish, who and what I was, while I plainly felt the broad sharp blade of the knife he wielded in his hand. I shall be excused for having quite forgotten the answer I made to this rough summons, under circumstances so startling. I said something, however, which, coupled with the sight of those above, satisfied my interlocutor, for he loosed his hold and said,—

"So, so, it's all right I find; but I dreamed that something jumped on me. Here, general, they are come."

At this moment a light in the distant gloom came forward faintly, and in a little more, I was truly rejoiced to observe the tall lank figure of Father Munoz, making its way towards me with a torch held in his hand. He cautiously picked his steps over the rugged obstructions of the spar-strewn floor; and as he came close, I observed a mattress with blankets spread close to the spot I landed upon, and upon the safe surface of which, with the body of the Spaniard who had slept on it, Ranger had happily fallen, and thus been almost miraculously saved. A couple of baskets of provisions stood close by, and I easily divined, without any explanation, that all these preparations for sleeping, eating, and drinking, were furnished by the provident attention of the monk, and had been borne on the back of the mule which had surprised us on our arrival at the cave.

"Well, I am here before you, my friends," said Father Munoz, addressing at once me, an Melchior, who stood above, and Malvide, whose downward course he anxiously watched, as she was safely lowered in her temporary chair. The monk kept cautiously distant from her, and left to me all the care of safely uncording her from the chair, and of explaining his having out-marched us, and made such careful provisions for our wants. In the mean time Melchior was lowered down, and renewed expressions of surprise and gratitude on his part, and that of Malvide, were the best tributes that could be offered to the monk's prompt movements and unceasing energy.

He soon explained to us the ample success of his plan in having divided the party; for the Vicomte, re-enforced by some Gendarmes, had followed at full speed his division, with the false belief of its encircling Don Melchior and his attendant bride. The monk having lured them by the most difficult and almost inaccessible paths, into the very heart of the pass of Bielsa, struck suddenly at nightfall into a track that wound in a totally contrary direction round the foot of Mount Arbison. He was accompanied by only two of his party, the remainder keeping up a sham appearance of retreat into Spain, but intending, as soon as it was dark, to return into France, where alone they were secure from the patriot troops; and leaving the Vi-

comte and his gendarmes, fatigued, benighted, and bewildered, to pursue their search or abandon it at their pleasure. Munoz, whose mind possessed the true greatness that attends to little things, directed his course to one of those temporary encampments of his own unfortunate and vagabond followers which were scattered through the mountains; and there he procured from fat Father Jose, a Capuchin of orthodox dimensions, wine, bread, and meat, (although it happened to be on a Friday) with a couple of mattresses, bolsters, and covering, and mules for himself and his attendants. Arrived at the cave, one of these men was sent back with the unladen mules; and it appeared that one of *them* thought proper to break loose from his control, and that it still wandered about the hills.

"Now, my friends, repose yourself awhile, take some refreshments, banish all fear, return thanks to the Providence that has protected you, and then, without delay, we will proceed to solemnize the holy contract which makes you one in the sight of Heaven, and which man can never, in conscience, annul."

So spoke Father Munoz. Melchior and Malvide looked their approbation, with happier faces than they had lately shown. I ventured to ask after Felix and the issue of his embassy.

"I have heard nothing of him," said the monk, "but I have sent a trusty guide to await him at the appointed place, and I doubt not he will soon arrive, with or without the object of his attempt."

Several torches were now lighted, two of the men came down with all the apparatus of Don Melchior's litter, and the contents of the baskets were soon displayed on tables of crystal blocks that offered themselves conveniently to our use. We all ate fast, and some of us heartily; I was amongst the latter number, but the lovers seemed to despatch their portion of the meal less from appetite than anxiety to remove the obstacle which retarded the ceremony, the completion of which they so much longed for.

The place in which we were was but a sort of vestibule to the grand chamber of the cave. It was vaulted, high, and narrow, with imperfect pillars formed of stalactites, but almost all defaced and broken off by the curious travellers who had descended, or by the mountaineers who carried pieces away to sell to those who declined the expedition. Our repast concluded, the monk, in one of his most solemn tones, exclaimed,

"Now to the chapel, my friends!" and he had once more his frequent air of a man wholly wrapped up and abstracted in considerations of his sacred functions.

We all stood up. I offered an arm to Melchior, who at the other side, was half supported by and half supporting Malvide. Two of the men preceded us with a torch in every hand; the monk moved forward next, similarly furnished, and we three brought up the rear, thus lighted on. But as we were about to enter into another of those narrow galleries which form the communication between the several caves, a sound of voices above, in apparent altercation, arrested our progress. Malvide attempted to rush forward, but the anxious curiosity of the monk kept him stationary, and the leaders also stood short.

"Not another step will I move—you're choking me—the rope has slipped up upon my throat—murder, murder!" exclaimed the squeaking voice of Monsieur Depourvu.

"Not at all, my dear Sir," said Felix, whom the light of the torch, left in the wall, now discovered, with his back to us as he stood on the platform, hauling up his companion through the cavity—"Not at all—it's absolutely nothing when one's used to it—pray now shove yourself up a little."

"I can't, I won't—I'll stick here, I'm determined on it. A church indeed! a pretty church! Take this infernal bandage off my eyes, Felix—I am sure you are about to murder me—don't pull me so—I am choking—murder, murder!"

But in the last throes the cavity disgorged its unwilling occupant, for he was lugged safely upon the platform, where he immediately sprang upon his feet.

"Where am I, then?" cried he, struggling fiercely with Felix and one of the Spaniards who re-adjusted the rope round his body. "Tell me where I am; you said we were coming into a church, but you've dragged me into a charnel vault, I'm sure of it. I'm all wet and torn to atoms, in these vile passages. Where am I, Felix?"

"Hold fast by the rope and you'll soon know," replied Felix (who had taken information of the place from his guide,) pushing him clear off the platform; and down he came, swinging and screaming with all his might, accompanied by a shriek from Malvide, a burst of hoarse laughter from the Spaniards, above and below, and the loud barking of Ranger, all of which discord was echoed drearily through the cavern.

Even when Depourvu touched the ground he was quite unsatisfied as to his safety. He screamed more violently than before, jumped about, rolled his head from side to side; while loud complaints and curses proclaimed that he believed himself to be actually hanging by his neck, and that he was thus in the very act of being barbarously murdered by Felix and the Spaniard. While one of the soldiers uncorded him and kept him somewhat more quiet, the monk gave the signal for our proceeding into the inner chamber of the vault.

Not a word was spoken that could betray the party to Depourvu. We walked silently forward through the narrow and difficult path at each side of which was a deep and dark abyss. We proceeded with the greatest caution, for one false step to the right or left would have plunged us into certain destruction. Felix, having safely descended, after some persuasion prevailed on Depourvu to suffer his eyes to remain bandaged, promising him most faithfully that a few minutes would bring him into the chapel, where he should certainly pounce upon Malvide, in the very fact of matrimony with his Spanish rival. The conversation went on:—

Depourvu. Oh, Felix, if I could but be sure of that, I would forgive you all, all this horrid treatment. If I could but catch her in the fact! then my hundred thousand francs would be safe, even though she won't marry me.

Felix. (eagerly.) What hundred thousand francs?

Here we all stopped with a simultaneous anxiety.

Depourvu. Why the money I lent to the Vicomte to be sure—the amount of the bond.

Felix. (recovering himself.) Ay, ay, to be sure, that is very true; but what bond?

Depourvu. Why, the bond you witnessed, what other?

Felix. That I witnessed!

Depourvu. Come, come, Master Felix, don't be so cunning—it's no use between us. The Vicomte told me that he told you to tell me that he had not told you any thing about it. But I have the bond safe and sound in this very pocket, for all that.

Felix. The devil you have?

Depourvu. Ay, snug; and I'll have my money back, every sous, great a fool as he takes me for.

Felix. Now, will you do me a favor, Monsieur Depourvu.

Depourvu. I'll do any thing on earth, in reason, for you, if you'll but show me Malvide and that pale whiskerandos of a Spaniard in the act and fact of being married.

Felix. Then I pledge myself to show them to you in less than five minutes, with the priest tying them together, if you will let me see that bond which I never read, though it appears I witnessed it!

Depourvu. Appears! Egad, it does plain enough, for your name is to it—Felix Doms—hard to read to be sure, for it is a miserable scrawl. Take off the bandage from my eyes, and here is the bond.

Felix. No, no. You don't want to see it, and my own eyes will serve my purpose—and you know our compact is broken when you are no longer blindfolded.

Depourvu. That's very good reasoning, certainly—so here, take it—I trust to your honor.

Felix. (examining the bond.) What an impudent scrawl, in imitation of my fine running hand—well I did not think my master was quite such a scoundrel.

Depourvu. In imitation! What do you mean by that?

Felix. Oh, nothing, nothing at all.

Depourvu. And what do you mean by a scoundrel?

Felix. Oh, that's less than nothing.

Depourvu. Indeed! But you see the clause for repayment?

Felix. (reading.) Yes, yes, clear enough. "To be repaid with the hundred thousand francs, the portion of my daughter Malvide, on her marriage with the said Monsieur Depourvu; and if he does not fulfil the said contract of marriage, but marries another person, the said Vicomte d'Euplandre to refund the sum of one hundred thousand francs to said Monsieur Depourvu." Ay, all very clear and explicit.

Depourvu. Yes, Felix, you see that, either way, I have secured the repayment of the money—you observe that.

Felix. (knowingly.) Neither way you mean.

Depourvu. (alarmed.) Why, what do you mean? Speak out, Felix; pray don't keep me in suspense; and just take this bandage from my eyes.

Felix. Do keep cool, my dear Sir, and answer me one question,—who drew out this bond?

Depourvu. Who? Why myself to be sure; you know it was all a secret between the Vicomte and myself, and you who witnessed it.

Felix. Then I'll tell you what, Monsieur Depourvu, your one hundred thousand francs are utterly lost, and forever.

Depourvu. What, how? What do you mean? Pray take off this infernal bandage, and let me look at you, to see if you are serious.

Felix. I'm quite serious, I assure you.

Depourvu. Then I'm very seriously ill—so do, like an honest fellow, hold me up awhile, and explain yourself.

Felix. (*supporting him.*) Well, now, listen to me. You see, in the first place, that had Mademoiselle Malvide married you, the Vicomte's debt was to be paid with the marriage portion; that is to say, you were to receive the portion in lieu of the debt.

Depourvu. Not at all; at the same time with it.

Felix. No, no, to be repaid *with* the marriage portion: not a word of "at the same time;" but *with*, with the portion Monsieur Depourvu, which means *by* the portion.

Depourvu. Do you know, it never struck me in that way.

Felix. I dare say, but rely on it, it is the construction of the clause.

Depourvu. Then I now finally give up all notion of marrying her—totally—I would not have her if she asked me—I would'nt, indeed.

Felix. Very well; but then if she marries another person?

Depourvu. Why, then I get back my money, and that's what I want—I don't want a wife; I would much rather live single.

Felix. But, my good sir, depend upon it you'll have neither wife nor money, your bond is not worth a *liard*.

Depourvu. You don't say so—pray don't! How do you mean, Felix?

Felix. Why, in the first place, being drawn up by yourself, and my name being forged to it, the Vicomte would deny its authenticity, and swear you have fabricated it altogether; for if he signed this name it is only like a clumsy imitation of his general style of writing—and I firmly believe you would be prosecuted and sent to the galleys for life.

This awful climax produced a really serious effect upon poor Depourvu. He shook as if in an ague, and seemed to breathe with difficulty. We all made signs to Felix to take off his bandage, but he was inexorable to our signals and the sufferer's prayers, and only motioned to us to go on. We obeyed his signal, for he proved himself so good a general as to be entitled to obedience: and as we moved forward I caught the pleased expression of my companions' countenances, but Malvide's showed, I thought, a feeling of disgrace, and Melchior's one of disgust at the discovery of the Vicomte's baseness. We heard Felix following us, step by step with his companion, whose nervous whispers died away in the dark echos of the passage.

We very soon reached the chamber to which the passage led; and the torches, held high up by the attendant soldiers, showed us all that can be seen of this extraordinary place. It differed but little in the ap-

pearance usual to such caverns, but, like most others, it was rich in the abounding wonders of Nature's subterranean works. Pillar and arch were there displayed, as if in mockery of art's supposed inventions; and the vaulted roof accorded with the vast yet graceful proportions of the rest. Many fantastic accessories presented themselves—altar, bench, and benitier. On high the columns of impending stalactites, showed what might be thought the pipes of a gigantic organ, and the ear seemed involuntarily listening for some sacred strain. A misty solemnity enveloped the whole of the visible scene; while beyond a broken and perilous causeway, both sight and imagination were baffled in the depths of a yawning and as yet unfathomed gulph.

All in all; it was a place suited for the solemnization of mysterious rites—a rich-wrought sanctuary, for the victims, whom persecution might in darker times have driven from the temple raised by man,—and whose faith required a worship place less broadly marked than the mountain side, the forest depths, earth's wide spread surface, and the universal vault of Heaven.

While my eye took in the scene here sketched, the soldiers ranged their torches on what looked an altar; the monk placed himself before it, and drew forth his book. Malvide and Melchior once more knelt; and Manoz's sonorous voice commenced again the ceremony, which the morning's interruption had left incomplete.

Felix and Depourvu now appeared, the latter stealing in on tiptoe, holding his companion's arm with both hands, and advancing with his right ear foremost, as if that was the side most adapted for catching the priest's accents.

"Aha! they are at it! we have caught them! Oh, my dear Felix—my best, my only friend!" exclaimed he.

"Hush!" murmured Felix, untying the cotton pocket handkerchief, which had been bound round his eyes, "hush! and I will give you ocular proof."

When the bandage fell off, and the glare of the torches flashed upon Depourvu, he looked utterly bewildered and half blinded. He rubbed his eyes, shook his head, and opened his mouth to swallow the reality of what he saw; and when he clearly distinguished what appeared to him an indubitable church, the monk in his canonicals, book in hand, and the grim-looking attendants who surrounded the torch-lit altar, he dropped down on his knees, in a fit of mingled piety and fright, uttering loud thanksgivings for his present safety, and prayers for his future preservation. But Felix whispered a few cabalistical words into his ear, and he instantly jumped up on his feet, clapped his hands loudly together, and cried out,

"Certainly, to be sure without doubt, with the greatest pleasure—I shall be charmed, enchanted."

"Enough, enough," said Felix, putting his hand across Depourvu's mouth, from which, imperfect reiterations of his delighted compliance, burst forth through the prison bars of Felix's fingers.

"Enough, I tell you!" exclaimed Felix, stamping fiercely, and frowning like the keeper of some half-tamed animal—"leave the rest to me."

He then advanced towards the monk, and said, loud enough to be heard by Depourvu.

"Most reverend father, and you, Sir, and Mademoiselle, excuse my interruption; but permit me to offer, on the part of Monsieur Depourvu, his anxious request that you will suffer him to fill the station which this lady's father has abandoned, and which no such old and faithful friend as he is, is here to occupy. He proposes to himself, in short, the honor of giving her away."

Through the compliance given instantly to this proposal by the three persons applied to, I plainly saw the workings of dissatisfaction at the rather degrading necessity which forced them to accept it. I myself could not help shrinking from the mockery which Depourvu was about to enact—but I saw that the others as well myself were deeply impressed with the importance of his being involved so thoroughly, by this voluntary relinquishment of his own claim, and the sanction afforded to Melchior's having replaced him.

The ceremony therefore went on without one dissentient voice. Malvide and Melchior were joined to each other for ever, and Depourvu gave away the treasure, with as much alacrity as if he had been throwing away a plague.

CHAPTER XXI.

The knot which ties a hero and heroine together, too often unravels the interest which the story-teller has been endeavoring to wind up. As nearly as possible to that point, then he should stop. All readers like to have something left to the imagination; and what so generally pleasing to speculate on as the joys of the newly married—their dangers and difficulties over; for though such may even then appear palpable to common observers, they have no existence for *them*. Leaving, then, the now hallowed mysteries of Sarrancolin to the occupation of these their sole possessors, I will beg my readers to accompany me on a mission of no small importance,—which I undertook at the united solicitation of all the party, and in which, at my suggestion, Monsieur Depourvu and Felix bore a part. This was no other than an embassy of explanation and conciliation to the Vicomte d'Esplandre.

I shall not dwell on the details of this somewhat delicate undertaking. I got through the task to the best of my ability, and only lamented that that did not equal my zeal. But, considering all circumstances, I procured tolerably good terms for the friends I represented, and whose cause I pleaded. I proceeded to the Vicomte's residence near Toulouse; and, introduced by Felix, seconded by Depourvu, I detailed the particulars of the union, which no opposition was able to prevent, and which it was now vain to endeavor to annul. I found myself listened to with a degree of patience which I had not looked for; and I discovered the Vicomte to be one of those reasonable persons who sub-

mit patiently when resistance is vain, and who put on smiles when nothing is to be gained by frowns. He was, therefore, not inflexible to my remonstrances, and he consented to forgive Malvide, though he persisted in condemning her conduct. He also very clearly proved his honesty, by refunding Monsieur Depourvu's one hundred thousand francs (which he had only borrowed as a kind of pledge for his completing his offer of marriage with Malvide ;) and he strengthened Felix's assertions of his own cleverness by confirming the confession of the latter that he had denied his signature as witness to the bond, merely as a trick to frighten Depourvu into a belief of fraud, and a participation in the marriage rites. The *honourable* nature of the Vicomte's intentions was made evident to me, and I was fain to take that conviction as sufficient grounds for giving a portion of esteem to a character in which I could find nothing more to demand admiration or excite regard. However, as human nature is too often found, the Vicomte might hold his head as high as his fellows.

Malvide's mother readily joined in my efforts to propitiate the severer parent, who was reasonable enough to make a merit of compliance with entreaties he could no longer resist. My visit to the Chateau of d'Euplandre was thus one of pleasure to myself and the great majority of the party concerned; and a full and free pardon was the next day despatched to Sarrancolin by the indefatigable Felix, I staying behind, at the earnest invitation of the Vicomte, to assist in preparations for the reception of the bride and bridegroom, and for the solemnization of the *civil* part of the ceremony, without which the matter-of-fact observances of French forms in such cases would be incomplete.

In due course of time Don Melchior and Malvide arrived at the paternal mansion; and with as little delay as was consistent with the requisite rules, the engagement already sanctified by religion was sanctioned by law. Malvide's beautiful head was bound in its bridal wreath of orange flowers, emblematic of the fragrant blossoming of joy within her heart. The young couple hurried off immediately to Paris, anxiously escaping from the cold quarantine of etiquette to which new married happiness is too commonly condemned in France. Felix was added to their establishment, at his and their joint request, their confidence and his fidelity being thus mutually guaranteed and rewarded.

Monsieur Depourvu retired into solitude of unwedded life, well pleased at having escaped the risks of matrimony, with security to the *other* money which had been, as he thought, in such jeopardy. I never happened to hear whether or not he again tried the perils of courtship, and am thus forced to hand him fairly over as another subject of interest to the "imagination of the reader."

After the departure of Don Melchior and his bride, there was nothing left to detain me in the part of France to which they and their adventures had hitherto imparted a charm. The whole horizon of politics was obscured, and little hope could be rationally entertained that the frontier line would be much longer held sacred. Winter was fast approaching, and all inducements to a prolonged stay in the neighbourhood of the Pyrenees were daily decreasing. I therefore

finally turned my back on the magnificent mountains, the first appearance of which had excited such lively sensations of admiration, and where I had at intervals passed so many days of adventurous delight. I parted from them as from a home, and my mind turns at times to their recollection with feelings almost domestic.

Father Munoz, still wildly enthusiastic in the cause of bigotry and despotism, returned again to the scene of his former operations, Having fulfilled, with that sublimity of devotion of which enthusiasts alone are susceptible, the duties so loudly claimed by friendship, and which were silently prompted by the other mysterious passion that he scarcely ventured to recognize, he felt that he could devote himself wholly to the mighty slavery in which he was self-enthralled. He passed some months in organizing a large body of the scattered wretches whose former ruin he had shared, and at their head he returned in the following spring into the unfortunate land of his birth, leading on the invaders,* before whose irresistible march the hopes of freedom were for a long enduring season crushed.

This woeful consummation realized, Munoz once more laid down his sword, and retired to his re-established convent to display that mixture of worth with fanaticism so injurious to the character of true virtue, by giving it the appearance of *relationship* with the evil to which it is only *allied*.

About the period at which the monk thus returned to the comparative seclusion of his convent I happened to be in Paris, and I heard of his retirement from public life in the following manner. Walking on the Boulevards alone, a group of officers of a regiment just returned from Spain approached me. One of them sprang forward, with infinite agility and somewhat of a theatrical air, enfolded me in his arms, and impressed on either cheek a most cordial salutation from his moustached and whiskered countenance. His epaulette struck me in the eye, and his hat fell upon the ground. I quickly recognized my old friend, Sergeant Passepartout, in his well-earned promotion to the rank of sub-lieutenant; and I gazed with pleasure on the ribbon of the Legion of Honor which protruded puffingly from his button-hole. He briefly sketched to me the rapid campaign of the French army, their bravery and moderation. I acknowledged the truth of all he said, and sorrowfully thought of the results of their triumphs. "As for me," said he, "I fought my way straight forward, going out of it a little at times for the sake of the dear creatures whom I took *en Echelon*. I did some things which my colonel approved—he recommended me to the general—and the latter asked me whether I would have an epaulette or the cross?" †

"Neither, General," said I, "until I am entitled to both—and *pardi*, my friend, you see I have got both!"

A few details about Munoz, and some extracts from the journal of his own amours closed our conference. I wished him joy of his promotion, and a continuance of good luck in love and war; and I left him to the indulgence of what he had already obtained. But I must go back a little to persons and scenes of greater interest.

*The French army under the Duke of Angoulême;

†The decoration of the Legion of Honor.

Don Melchior gradually recovered from the effects of the villain Sanchez's poignard. He awaited in Paris the last hour of hope for the neutrality of France in the coming contest, of which Spain was to be the theatre and her sons the actors. He watched with ardent anxiety the progress of every measure of conciliation on the one hand, and of repulsive disdain on the other. He could make no allowance in that moment of excitement—and what friend of freedom could?—for the secret instinct which might have whispered the court of the Tulleries that its very existence was at stake, and that to temporize was to be lost—that every thing must be ventured and a blow boldly struck, even though the first principles of liberty were the victims.

Melchior viewed, in the bitterness of his feelings, but one aspect of this double-faced transaction. He execrated the principles, and he wished to defy the power that was in march against his country. He looked on the troops that were intended for its invasion with real aversion and would be contempt—and remembering only what the French guards had been when he served in them himself, he gazed on them now with feelings as violent as they were in truth unjust; for soldiers must strike when governments command, and if military force deliberates, civil freedom is lost.

Melchior outstaid the departure of the Ambassador of Constitutional Spain; he attended the review of the French troops, destined for the final re-enforcements, on the arrival of which at the frontier, the *cordon sanitaire* was to commence its fatal inroad, and in the bitterness of his heart he wrote some verses during his preparations, on that last day, for quitting Paris, as he vowed for ever. These I have translated as follows, using a liberty with them as if they were my own, by suppressing one or two passages which subsequent circumstances proved to be individually unjust.

ON THE MARCH OF THE FRENCH GUARDS FOR THE INVASION OF SPAIN,

There they stand in their tripple ranks,
In the Bourbon palace yard;
Playthings for each new tyrant's pranks,
Slaves, soldiers, hirelings, Gauls or Franks,
The Bourbon royal guard.

I saw them once, when *another* name
Flung its mighty shadow o'er;
When these sons of war were heirs of fame,
And glory's rays, not the rust of shame,
Were spread on the chains they bore.

How different was their bearing then
To their crest-fallen brows to-day!
They looked as they ne'er shall look again,
Like demi-gods more than mortal men,
Drawn out in their fierce array.

By heavens, 'twas grand to see them spring
 Elastic from the ground,
 And to hear the wide courts echoing
 As they yelled the name of their Emperor king,
 And the clash of their arms went round.

And they seemed, as they waved their helms on high,
 And swung their glittering blades,
 And swept in clouds their chieftain by,
 Less things of the world than spirits of the sky,
 Or warriors from the shades.

While HE, as he sat on his war-horse there,
 Wrapped in his shroud of pride,
 Might be thought some demon of the air,
 In the gloomy grandeur of despair,
 The whirlwind's course to guide.

And is that fearful pageant gone,
 Has it vanished from the earth,
 Have the thousands that then rushed wildly on,
 Sunk in the grave with the mighty one
 Who gave their terrors birth!

And what are those ranks that I gaze on now?
 And whose is yon shrivelled form,
 That shivering stands, with cringing brow,
 Like a dripping bird on some vessel's prow,
 That heralds yet hides from the storm.*

* * * *

Not a shout is raised, not a feeble smile
 Plays over one lowering front,
 Not a joke goes round the hours to beguile,
 Not a prayer is breathed from a single file
 That must brave the battle's brunt.

And mark! they move, with sluggard tramp,
 Hollow, and dull, and slow,
 The ground gives back the heavy stamp
 Of limbs, whose nerves seemed coiled with cramp,
 So limping and lame they go.

And whither go they?—Ha, hold your sides,
 Each laughter-loving fiend
 That plunges men down fate's whelming tides,
 That tears young bridegrooms from their brides,
 That mocks, in storm-clouds screened,

* This stanza and the one omitted, related to the Duke of Angoulême who behaved far better than the verses anticipated, and considering the feebleness of his intellect merits, and few reproaches as possible for his conduct as nominal chief of the invading army.

At all the miseries of mankind,
 Drifting on passion's seas,
 L'ke a rudderless bark before the wind,
 When despots dark and bigots blind
 Urge on such things as these.

Let every urchin sprite laugh out
 That sports with mortal's pain,
 While demons dire send back the shout,
 Piercing bursting round the inglorious rout
 That goes to conquer Spain!!

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!
 The demon-chorus flies,
 Hurra! hurra! hurra! hurra!
 Echoes o'er Spain, while the loud huzza!
 Of her legioned hosts replies.

"Come on," they cry, "ye men of France,
 "Come tyrants with your hordes!
 "Fit light shall shine o'er your advance,
 "Liberty's broad and burning glance,
 "And the gleam from freeman's swords.

"Fit welcome shall wait on each mountain height,
 "Strong arms, and new-dug graves,
 "And your requiem song be the croaking flight
 "Of eagles, and birds of the night,
 "O'er the carcasses of slaves!

From the first skirmish on the banks of the Bidassoa till the last assault against the ramparts of Cadiz, Don Melchior was one of the foremost to oppose the invaders. I had several letters from him during this career of dismal glory, amid the fluctuations of hope and despondancy. He clung widely to the first, while even one shred remained. But the energies of Spain were paralyzed under the withering influences of bigotry, and her patriots were scattered before its baneful breath. Riego, the brightest, the purest of them all, was hanged as a vile felon in the polluted streets of the capital he had entered a hero, and the hearts of all that were liberal in Europe sickened with sorrow and swelled with indignation at the news.

From that sad moment the political world contained no atmosphere in which hope for Spain could breathe. It was stifled, perhaps to rise again! But the chequered ray of freedom which gleamed on her for awhile, showed the glorious aspect of a just revolution, rising in simple grandeur, upheld by dignified moderation, and sinking undefiled by crime—a fine inheritance to the days to come! a splendid contrast to that of France, that frantic burst of national despair, whose fatal example, by terrifying half the world with the memory of its horrors, ensures the degradation of the other, from apprehension of their return.

But the revolution of Spain has gone far to counteract this effect—and after-ages will look back to it, as the model for those uprisings

against the abuse of power, of which the weakness of human nature causes the too frequent necessity. It is for us to do honor to those immortal men who proved that success is not necessary to constitute a hero; and in freely granting to them that proud title, I need not supplicate for *mine* the honor that is shared by all who perished nobly in battle or suffered gloriously in exile.

Don Melchior de Travazos was among the latter. His last farewell to hapless Spain had scarcely died away across the wide waters which he traversed, when regenerated Colombia hailed him with her welcome, and years are passing over not too swiftly for his fame, for every one showers down new honors on his head.

And she—my heroine—need my readers be told of her? Will they ask who shared his perils, and participates in his happiness? Who soothed his anguish in defeat, and brightened the triumph of his victories? Who wandered with him hand in hand—felt with him heart in heart—and reposes with him side by side?

NOTE.

The political events which have been here so minutely entered on speak sufficiently for themselves, and require no further explanation. This episode of the stormy scenes which led to the establishment of Constitutional Liberty in Spain was but one of hundreds quite as romantic, and many of them more improbable. I do not mean to assert that it was my fortune to be mixed up in others of the like nature; but I heard of them and read of them all around me on the whole line of frontier, and whoever may have wandered through the Pyrenees during those eventful days will bear witness to the thrilling adventures which were then rife.

It is almost needless to say that none of the names of the actors in this tale are real ones. If there has been any indelicacy in making this story public, I at any rate defy any one to trace the individuals either in Old or New Spain. Of those alluded to, without actually figuring in the story, Mina was certainly the most remarkable; and I cannot help contrasting the keen anxiety I felt for a sight of this mountain chief on the scene of his celebrated exploits, with my in-

tense disappointment when I was introduced to him some years after, in a crowded London Saloon. But he was then seen to great disadvantage certainly; for beside him was Arguelles, a noble specimen of his kind. Mina was not, however, the only Hero I have met in my life who had but little heroism in his bearing. His after conduct in Catalonia, marked by such brutal cruelty, was quite in keeping with his cold and clumsy air and manner. True liberalism rejects such champions, and can never be honorably worked out by such instruments.

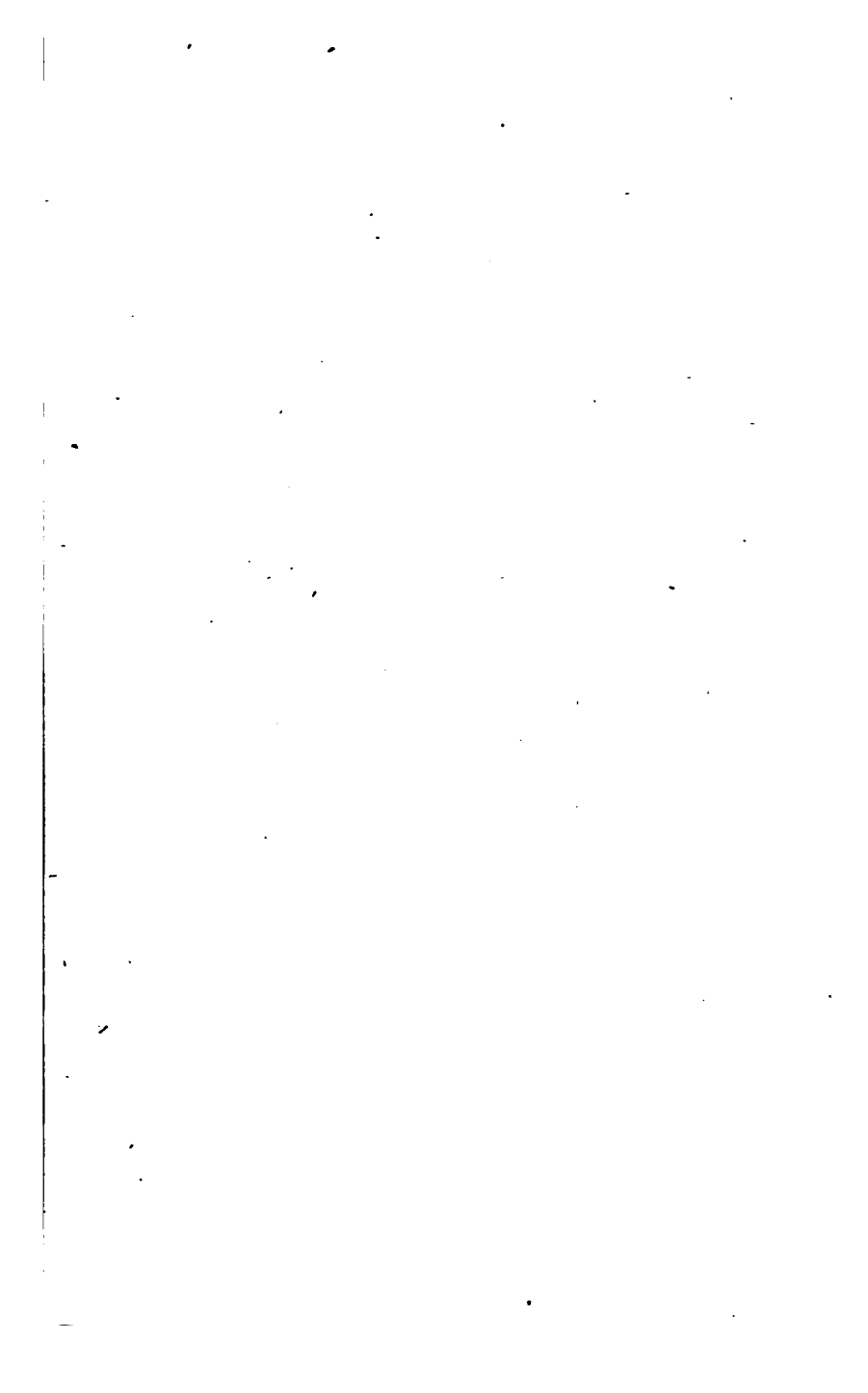
Another distinguished individual and far superior one, to whom I endeavored to do justice in these pages—Joseph Bonaparte—it has not yet been my lot to fall in with. I have hitherto missed that honor at both sides of the Atlantic. Of the other persons mentioned in the tale I have altogether lost all record for several years; and I am almost sure that I shall never again come on their traces



SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING.

"Is this a dream, now, after my first sleep? or are these phant'sies made
i' the light heart.

BEN JONSON'S NEW INN.



SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING.

CHAPTER I

Since I first began to use my pen for the purpose of scribbling for the public, one of my most ardent wishes has been to write a Ghost Story; but I have been long withheld, by a notion that the supernatural was worn out, as a means not merely of terror, but of entertainment. It still, no doubt, possesses among my contemporaries many powerful supporters; but reason seems fast exorcising the spirits engendered by imagination, and the millennium of good sense—or perhaps of common place—has fairly commenced upon earth. It is certain that the marvellous has lost its sway amongst us. A religion, severe in proportion to its purity, has shattered the prism which showed us, in a thousand varying colors, the brilliant fancies of the old mythology. The fictions of the middle ages, too, creations of popular credulity, rather than of religious awe, illusions less imposing but far more pleasing, lose, in the hands of modern writers, all their grace and elasticity. They become the inanimate puppets of a showman, not ærial beings of the brain—degenerate offsprings of a celestial race, which seems ill at ease in the lowly habitations of mortality.

The secret is, that we have lost our faith in those charming superstitions; the materialized enjoyments of the times no longer sympathize with the phantoms of romance; and the author who would weave a web of magic in which he has no belief, must manage with a heavy touch the vapory essences of fairy land. I confess myself to observe the change with regret; for I consider superstition, in all its modified forms, to be widely distinct from *ignorance*, inasmuch as it has been shared by many of the wisest and most learned; and I look on it as one of the safest minor means for the government of what must ever be a large portion of mankind. A superstition of some sort, seems a natural want of the mind; and the history of human nature proves the continual changes of the object, but no abatement of the principle. But a grosser species of enchantment than spirits or genii, is required to charm the incredulity of the sceptic world we move in; and the austerity of knowledge, which disdains the array

of goblin impositions, is not proof against that dread of spectral agency, which religion sanctifies, and at which even philosophy involuntarily shudders. Trusting, then, to the existence of this instinct, interwoven with our nature, I venture to record the progress of a story, full of mystery, not merely superhuman, but of that tangible texture which arouses all our flesh-and-blood sensibilities.

The heavy tongue of the cathedral clock had just struck nine, when I entered the town of La Rochelle, in that part which joins the sea, on the road from Rochefort. It was late in the month of November, with neither moon nor stars to light my path. A westerly wind, blowing strongly from the ocean joined itself with the noarse voice of the tide, upon the huge mound that protects the harbor, and, rushing through the town, swung to and fro the large lanterns, suspended at long intervals across the streets, making their lights flicker dismally, and their fastenings creak like the chains of a gibbet. Every thing was an illustration of the dreary animation of a country town at night, in the fall of the year. The shop-doors were closed; but a drowsy lamp or candle (here and there) half betrayed the miserable merchandize within. A couple of carts were dragged heavily over the pavement by horses which seemed to walk in their sleep; and a few straggling old women, or tired artisans, were plodding along in search of their supper or their homes. The streets were dirty, and in the centre of one of them a poor little Savoyard was grinding the mournful discord of his viol before a solitary house, which, by its paucity of lights, gave no symptoms of society within.

I never saw altogether a more perfect picture of dreariness. A town wholly uninhabited would have been less painfully so. Even the wild marshes I had been shooting across till sunset were less desolate, for their fancy had full play—but *here* imagination lay utterly stagnant. Ranger, who had joyously bounded and frolicked all day, got close to me, as we entered this cheerless place, and he and I trudged along in silent and dull companionship.

Being quite a stranger to the town, it was mere chance that led me to the quay; and the first decent looking inn which caught my eye being situated there, I was not long in choosing my quarters for the night. It was not that the aspect of the house was peculiarly inviting, for it looked lonely enough, and of the second or third rate order of *auberge*; but I was fatigued, and out of spirits for the more bustling scenes of those houses were diligences, pataches, and other public conveyances, are wont to stop. A quiet bed and a good night's rest were more to my mind than seeking adventures or observing characters; so I walked into the kitchen, which opened upon the gateway and had its windows fronting the quay.

The air of this room was peculiarly cheerless and oppressive. It was lighted by one tall dim candle, standing on a table in a corner. There was a wretched fire in the wide hearth, at one side of which dozed a fat old woman of about sixty years of age; and at the other a man, full one third older, emaciated, and sickly looking, was fast asleep, bent down almost into the ill-burning fagots, which cast their faint glare on his white cotton nightcap and wrinkled face. I paused for a while near the door, uncertain that I had not mistaken

the private residence of a forlorn old couple for a house of public resort. But on looking inquiringly round the room, I observed a man lying on a bench. He was also apparently asleep; but on observing my hesitation, he said, in a careless way, "Come in, Sir, come in, don't be afraid."

Upon this invitation I walked forward, and took possession of an arm chair which stood before the fire. The man who addressed me stood up, and came yawningly forward.

"Can I have a bed here for the night, my friend?" asked I.

"You must be a stranger in La Rochelle to ask that question," replied he; "you may have seven good ones if you want them."

"What, is your house quite empty?"

"With the exception of yourself and the family, I hope." There was a careless sort of significance in this reply that did not strike me much at the time; and I remarked to the man that every thing I saw in the house bore the appearance of great drowsiness.

"No wonder," replied he; "this is the third night of watching, and nothing is come yet." The last words were accompanied by a sleepy smile, and my notion was that they must bear some allusion to the arrival of those smuggling boats, which come constantly into the harbours on the French western coast, and for the crews of which the house seemed quite suited. My companion, on the present occasion, was a kind of sailor-like person, half waiter, half master, and, as I supposed, could be only the son of the old people by the fire-side. He was middle aged, nearer forty-five than fifty, rough handed and awkward, as if pulling a rope was more natural to him than cleaning a plate; yet he set rather briskly to work in a little room inside the kitchen, making preparations for my supper, which I begged him to busy himself about immediately.

The clatter of the crockery, which was thus called into requisition, aroused the old woman from her slumber, and she stared with an apparent mixture of astonishment and pleasure to see a guest about to sup in her house. She bounced up and bustled about, making me a thousand civil speeches and apologies for having been caught napping; and her pleasure seemed increased tenfold, when, in a whispered communication from the man, she learned that I had actually engaged my lodgings for the night. Then began in downright earnest the busy stir of preparation. Frying-pans, warming-pans, plates, dishes, sheets and bolsters, severally and collectively engaged the attention of my hostess. It was not easy to guess in what order she classified her ideas, or whether eating or sleeping, the supper-table or the bed-chamber, claimed precedence. In the midst of the din, which need not have been greater had a dozen guests unexpectedly arrived, the antiquated master of the house unconsciously occupied his corner; but a short thickset woman, formed pretty nearly on the same model as her mistress, and on whose plump cheeks the feet of time had begun to leave slight traces, came into the kitchen, winking and rubbing her eyes, and adjusting her cap and kerchief, as if she, like the others, had been roused from a snatched and comfortless repose.

As she entered, and encountered the bustling landlady, and her

own busy husband, for such the man turned out to be, she stared as if she saw the wonders of a dream; and her astonishment was most audibly expressed, when she learned in her turn that I had ordered supper for *two* and a bed for *one*. Not to be behind hand in this moment of employment, she seized a pair of bellows, and began puffing at the several stems of young trees, which lay at almost their full and natural length across the huge hearth. Now, I dare say not one of my readers has failed to remark, what I have so often observed, the contagious inclination, which seems common to all mankind on such occasions, to seize the bellows out of the hands of one another, and aid in making or marring the fire. Whence comes this puffing propensity, or why it should be contagious I do not stop to inquire; but for my own part I was quite sure, when this woman took hold of the bellows, that they would not be suffered to remain long in her hands. And scarcely had she applied them to the fire, when her husband threw a longing glance at her occupation, and almost immediately abandoning his own, he flung his handful of knives, forks, and spoons upon the table, and gently snatched the asthmatic implement from the grasp of his helpmate.

"Come, come, my dear," cried he, "let me save you that trouble. Do you give the gentleman's dog his supper, and I'll soon make a blazing fire." And he puffed away accordingly.

She reluctantly resigned; but scarcely had he commenced his operations, when his mistress turned sharply round from the large press filled with linen, at which she was occupied, and, following the common attraction, placed herself beside the self-satisfied fire-maker, and briskly divested him of the wind instrument whose harmonies had brought her to the spot.

"There, there, that will do very well," said the hostess; "do you make ready the table while your wife airs the sheets, and let me settle these crossgrained fagots—I know how to make them burn"—and to work she went, puffing away care from the pips of the bellows.

But scarcely had she begun, when a shrivel'd hand, feebly stretched forth from the chimney-corner, felt gropingly in the direction of the sounds, and a tremulous voice exclaimed,

"Give them to me, give them to me; I have nothing else to do, my love; trust to me for making the dampest log burn brightly."

The old dame, in evident disappointment, but good natured withal, yielded to the desire of her superannuated spouse, and placed in his trembling hands the means of producing the popular air he sighed for. "Verily," soliloquized I, "the love of bellows-blowing *must* be an instinct—for what else could reconcile its followers to the furnace heat of a forge, the monotony of an organ loft, or the perusal of a lottery advertisement? Puff, puff, puff! seems a vital impulse of existence, and comes naturally to almost every man, whether he be or be not trumpeter, poet, or pastry cook!" and I ended my monologue, by mechanically withdrawing the universal instrument from the unconscious hold of my old neighbor, and I forthwith began to prove myself no exception to the rule I had laid down, as applying to mankind in general.

By the time I had succeeded in producing a conflagration among the fagots, which had so long lain fuming and spluttering before me, Ranger had, under the auspices of the younger woman, made an excellent repast, and mine was quite ready for consumption. The glare from the hearth, threw a deep red tinge on all around. Although the old man was evidently fire-proof, his cheeks were scorched into bloom. The hostess looked ruddier than ever, and her assistants were glowing from the efforts of cookery.

All the insect ornaments of the kitchen were warmed into life by the inspiring flame, and various domestic implements of brass and copper seemed to dance in their dusky corners, while the blaze fell flickering on them, and caused momentary intervals of light and shade. An old upright clock, of English form and prodigious stature, was brough into full relief. Its pendulum waved pompously backwards and forwards, made evident through the oblong oval of a glass window, and the dim dial-plate was surmounted by a broad white sun, whose ghastly disk looked more like a death's head grinning down into the room. The walnut-tree furniture was old but well preserved. There was an air of serious regularity altogether about the place that looked unnatural at an inn, and was therefore unpleasing; and the total absence of every thing, young or sportive—for there was not as much as a kitten by the chimney side, or a parrot above it—completed the comfortless want of the associations that seem naturally allied with a house of *entertainment*.

Notwithstanding the good fire, I felt chilly, and in spite of the good cheer, unrefreshed. I had the little table brought from thy parlor into the kitchen, and I did my best to be sociable. But my own efforts had no external support. The people around me were dull and drowsy. The place was desolate; Ranger slept, and by the time I had finished my bottle of Bourdeaux wine, and my liqueur glass of *Cogniac*, a century old, my eyes and those of the skullfaced sun which ornamented the clock, were the only ones in the room that were not fast closed.

Resolved to break away from the heavy spell which bound me, I roused the waiter from his doze, and requested his wife to prepare my bed-room. She started at the sound, looked incredulous a moment, but, recollecting herself, proceeded to carry up stairs the sheets, warming-pan, etcetera. When she had reached half way up the flight of steps that communicated with the inner room, she turned round, and with a countenance deadly pale, inquired of her husband, "If he was not coming with her?"

"Poh! poh!" replied he, with the same sort of smile which I had before remarked; "can't you go up alone?"

"Alone!" echoed she. "Come, come, my dear, for heaven's sake, I am ready to faint with fright."

"Well, well, here I am, my girl," said he, reassuringly, and he accompanied her up stairs, with a bundle of wood under his arm.

I should mention here that, while supper was in preparation, a good deal of conversation was kept up between mistress, maid, and man, which, from the rattling of keys, and the frequent mention of "the green chamber," I concluded, and, as it turned out correctly, to have reference to the room which I was to occupy.

After a little time, feeling quite overcome, I prepared to follow the servants; and though I moved as lightly as possible, with only Ranger's silken footsteps at my heel, I awoke the old landlady, who stared wide at me once more, on perceiving the route I was taking. "Good night, Sir, God bless you!" said she, with an emphasis that would have suited a farewell to a man setting out on a perilous voyage; and she added, in a more housewife-like key, addressing her servants or her *children*—I did not then know which, for the epithet was not decisive—"Come, my children, light the gentleman to his room—to the green chamber, mind. Good night, Sir; God bless you, and watch over you!"

"Amen!" uttered the feeble voice of the octogenaire by the fire-side; and, as well as I can recollect at this distance of time, I felt an involuntary thrill, as if the faint tone went piercingly and supernaturally through me. But I am rarely subject to such fancies, and they made no impression then.

Lighted up stairs, and conducted by man and *maid*—as we must, by courtesy, call the younger dame—(the hostess having shudderingly replied to my half-joking invitation that she would escort me. "*Me*, Monsieur? no, no, not for worlds!")—I approached the green chamber, so drowsy and fatigued that I paid but little attention to the ambiguous bearing of the party.

CHAPTER II.

Nothing in the whole history of hostelry could be more comfortable than was the chamber to which I was conducted. It was large and ill furnished; its wainscoted sides assorted dismally with the dark and vapory atmosphere of the whole. The caudle seemed struggling in mist, and a more solid fog was rising from the bundle of wet sagots to which my attendants were by turns applying the pipe of an unwieldy and broken-winded bellows. The bed curtains were of green stuff, of old texture and form, and but for their color, I should not have divined how the chamber came to be christened *green*; for it and its contents were, with this sole exception, of a dingy disagreeable hue. The room possessed the affluence of closets, shelves, and presses common to French houses; and, what with the pannels of the wainscot, it looked all doors. There was, however, one window, before which hung a brown curtain; and under a long looking-glass, which reflected the taper from a thick coat of mist, stood a little bow-legged marble table, with rusty gilding and distorted shape, marking it as the revolutionary spoil of some aristocratical and ancient man-

sion. On this table stood a brown basin and water-jug, of coarse manufacture and uncouth shape; and on the floor, not exactly in the middle of the room, though meant for it, a piece of faded tapestry did the honors of a carpet, of which (like most proxies) it was a sorry representative. Searching for some object of amusement in my dreary apartment, I was conning the dubious subject represented on this patched and piebald shred of antiquity, and tracing the gigantic proportions of a man, clad in a tunic, which peeped from under a many colored garment, and bearing a crown upon his head. I took him for one of the monarchs of heraldry, till I discovered that he bore a long blue bludgeon on his shoulder. No, thinks I, he must be the king of clubs; and I was the more confirmed in this opinion, by observing that either the artist was a bungler, or the figure club-footed; when round the red stocking of a leg, which might from its position be either the right one or the left, I traced a yellow band, and distinguished these fragments of words—*NI SORT QUI MA*. A protuberance on the shin-bone of this identical member seemed to me a patch, formed of a part of the roof of a house, but comparing it with the deformity of the rest of the figure, I exclaimed, quite self-satisfied—"It is Richard the Third—crookbacked—bandy Richard!" But unfortunately for my antiquarianism, I at the moment discovered the name, title, and quality of this doubtful and most dignified personage, all made evident in one word worked between his legs—or his *pillars*, I might call them—and this word was *HERCULE*.

I never assumed for my dog Ranger a character of downright philosophy—but I certainly was surprised to see him studying this curious representation of "the human form *divine*," quite as attentively as I did myself, and more so when I discovered directly between the feet of this Hercules, a lank, white, sharp-nosed, cock-tailed thing, meant no doubt for a *dog*. "Here is a new proof," thought I, "of Ranger's intelligence," while he looked wistfully at the worsted-worked animal, wagged his tail, and scraped upon the tapestry;—but I was a little disappointed I confess, as he unceremoniously doubled himself up and lay down, proving that he was only recognizing a bed, instead of tracing an analogy. I took the hint, however; dismissed my attendants, cut short their civilities, and was soon stretched within the canopy of green curtains.

The beds in France are all excellent; I know of no exceptions. Woollen mattresses are quite soft enough, without the suffocating and lumpy inequalities of a feather bed; and sufficiently firm, without the crisp and prickly annoyances of a hair-stuffed couch. I should, therefore, I am sure, have slept well through the night in question, had it not been impossible to get a pillow, a very common want in French inns, and I found a tight-covered log-like bolster as complete a murderer of sleep as "Macbeth," or a guilty conscience. I closed my eyes, but to open them again; tossed and turned from side to side; shook the blankets, and beat the hard-hearted bolster; but all ended in broken slumbers, and a crick in my neck.

If the French had not notoriously a horror of fresh air, one might suppose from the construction of their houses, that they held it in great

honor, for the most hospitable facilities are afforded to give it the *entree* at all parts. It whistled carelessly through a dozen apertures in "the green chamber;" and, after a short time, finding the key-holes inconvenient channels of communication, it forced the door by which I entered from the corridor (which according to my general practice, I had not bolted), and another also that opened upon a back stair-case, leading from the court-yard to the garrets. The creaking of these doors was a dubious lullaby; and I experienced that strange laziness, which sometimes creeps upon us when half asleep, and which prevents the momentary exertion that would remove the obstacle to perfect repose—such as a want of sufficient covering on a cold night, or the closing of a window-shutter or a door, on a windy one, like that in question. Instead of boldly getting out of bed, I only strove to shut out the interruption with the blankets, and in this imperfect security I continued my attempts to sleep. The house was completely quiet; not a whisper from below was to be heard; and at last, in despite of all impediments, I sank into forgetfulness. I must have slept some time, for on opening my eyes, and turning them towards the fire-place, I saw that the fagots were completely reduced to ashes, which emitted just light enough to show the floor and the wainscot in the immediate neighborhood of the chimney. I cannot say what awoke me. I supposed at the moment it was merely the uncomfortable position of my head, but I am not now quite sure of that. Be that as it may, and imperfectly awake as I was, I distinguished a short breathing, and observed a figure standing near the fire-place imperfectly shadowed out by the light of the expiring embers. Putting my hand quietly out of bed, I placed it on my gun, which stood close by, and I saw the figure deliberately open a small cupboard, which almost touched the chimney. It closed it soon again; and as neither the opening or shutting made the least noise, I concluded the hinges to have been more carefully oiled than those of larger dimensions, the creaking of which had been all night annoying me.

Being a little impatient, or perhaps I may say nervous, at this silent visitation, I was just going to invoke the intruder in no set phrase, when a dying gleam from the chimney showed him to be very distinctly, as I thought, the spare, emaciated form of the poor old man whom I had left so snugly by the fire-side in the kitchen. I did not see his face sufficiently to justify me in swearing to his identity; but at the time I had no notion but that it was he; and supposing that he was harmlessly wandering about the house, as old people are so wont to do in their accustomed localities, I let go my gun, turned on the other side, and strove to sleep again. In a moment or two, I started up on feeling something gently touching my feet, and putting out my hand, I found it was Ranger, who was creeping up on the bed, and trembling violently, from the cold of his former couch, as I then supposed.

I looked sharply through the opening of the curtains, but could see nothing; I listened, but caught no sound; so, concluding that the old gentleman had quietly made his exit, the way by which he came, I patted Ranger's back, lay down again, and finished my imperfect sleep, from which I again opened my unrefreshed lids, just as the first grey gleam of morn was coming through the window, unobstructed by a

shutter, and stealing faintly into the chamber through the moth-eaten woollen curtain.

I sprang out of bed, glad to find that my hour of rest was come, for my night had harassed me sadly; and I went to the window to ascertain the state of the weather. Upon drawing the window-curtain I saw with some surprise that both doors of the room were closed, and I wondered for an instant how my nocturnal visitor could have so nicely acquired the secret of shutting them without noise. Looking through the window, which opened upon the back premises of the house, I could distinguish nothing in the misty air but a straggling mass of offices, ill-built and ruinous; and I was turning round towards my bed again, when something moving across the yard fixed my attention, and I clearly perceived the same figure which had entered my room during the night, slowly bend its steps towards the most distant part of the out-house, that seemed, as well as I could trace its appearance, a kind of barn or granary. "What a perturbed old animal!" thought I; "it is more like a ghost than a man."

This thought had scarce had mental utterance when the figure, having reached the barn, stopped suddenly, turned round its head towards me as I thought and disappeared instantaneously. My eyes vainly strained after it through the haze. I breathed upon and wiped the dust covered pane, but to no purpose; and briefly wondering what the superannated wanderer could be about, I lay down again in my bed, impatient of a rational hour for rising.

The light came creepingly across the floor and wall, and at length it filled the room. Tired of lying sleeplessly and unoccupied in bed, a situation which some people like, but which is to me always irksome, I definitively arose at about eight o'clock, and as no one seemed stirring in the house, I wrapped my flannel dressing-gown about me and walked down stairs in search of warm water and breakfast. When I got into the kitchen all was dark, beyond the immediate neighborhood of the door by which I entered. I heard a quartetto of snoring, in different tones, but I could see nothing. Groping my way forward, I came in direct contact with a table, from which my hand swept off a bottle which came to the floor and broke in pieces. At the sound, and catching a glimpse of my scarce visible figure, three of the sleepers started up—the man with a convulsive oath, the women with shrieks. The latter hid their faces, as I quickly perceived, when the man, more rational, flew to the window and threw wide the shutters, and when he found it was I that had alarmed them he burst into a loud laugh. His wife and mistress, (no insinuation against his morality) echoed his laugh faintly, but pleasedly—and I confess I started, I know not exactly with what feeling, when I observed the old man, fast asleep, and occupying precisely the station in which I had left him dozing the preceding night!

The busy stir of the others soon, however, called off my observation from this strange, and, I then began to think, somewhat mysterious being. The volubility of the women was excessive, while inquiring how I slept—whether any thing disturbed me—if I heard any noises—saw any thing unusual, and a variety of other questions, all uniting to convince me that some suspicious belief existed in con-

nexion with the room I slept in, and towards which; I must confess, my own notions at the moment had a tendency. I was, however, extremely guarded in my replies, not willing unnecessarily to disturb the fancies of these good people, or to give the sanction of my concurrence to the bad name which they honestly acknowledged their house had acquired. They were very anxious that I should sign a certificate, legalized before a justice of the peace and a public notary, that I had not been disturbed by supernatural sounds or sights, and that I went to their house, a mere stranger, unprejudiced by and unacquainted with the reports of its being haunted. This certificate I did actually give; but while it was in preparation I despatched my breakfast, and quitted the mysterious mansion to take a turn upon the beach and in the town, secretly resolving to make some inquiry relative to the inn and its inhabitants.

When I found myself fairly out upon the quay, under the influence of a fine sharp morning, I witnessed an admirable illustration of the difference between darkness and daylight. The town, which the night before, had appeared dismal and desolate, now wore the brisk appearance of vivacity and pleasure. It was Sunday morning. Well dressed groups were in motion in the streets; and varied sounds of animation were afloat. At one corner a baker stood at his shop-door, with apron, open shirt, and naked legs and arms, blowing a long tin horn, which loudly summoned the customers of his oven. The church bell was tolling for prayers. The drums and trumpets of the garrison were sounding for parade; and a noisy party of mountebanks were fitting up a temporary stage in the chief square, and by various dissonant announcements proclaiming the coming entertainments.

I was quite surprised to find the town so well built, so cheerful and so cleanly. Many excellent houses with porticoes and arcades, gave promise of wealth and comfort within; and showed by the style of building, that when they were erected, the rich merchants had profited largely by the discovery of Guinea, the merit and gain of which belong to La Rochelle.

Having by experience acquired the tact so necessary for him who would gain information, I soon led my inquiries to bear upon the quarter which gave me accommodation the preceding night. I did not scruple to put in requisition the communicativeness of more than one straggling and garrulous citizen, in whose listless and idle air, I read want of mind and wealth of words.

By the time I got back to the inn, I was much better acquainted with its inhabitants than they were aware of; and by a well managed display of my knowledge, I succeeded in getting them to add to it to the full extent of my wishes. So that by a couple of days spent in braving the discomforts of the green-chamber, where I met with no further molestation, and conciliating the good will of my entertainers, I gathered sufficient of the raw material of narrative to enable me to manufacture the following story.

CHAPTER III.

It was just fifteen years previous to my visit to La Rochelle, that a catastrophe of a very fatal kind finished a career of great prosperity, long enjoyed by the inn in question, blasted its reputation for fair play, and procured it the suspicion of dark doings and supernatural visitations.

For full twenty years before that gloomy event this house had been in possession of a man named Louis Potdevin, who with his wife, for they had no children, were generally considered to have amassed a very large sum of money, for persons of their calling. But their gains were made without reproach, and seemed the natural consequences of industry and honest dealing. From the moment of Potdevin's entering upon matrimony and business, which were simultaneous speculations, not a proof could be made evident that he had ever swerved from the direct line of honesty. Yet some how he was always looked on with a suspicious eye. He was a great speculator, and deep intriguer. He was successful in his trade, and discreet in his politics—and though always dabbling in whatever scheme was afloat in the town, of commerce or politics, he always contrived to come clean through without loss on the one hand, or conviction on the other. He had run safe and sound the gauntlet of the revolution—unharmful in purse or person; had been always one of the most forward of the citizens in every public concern, was always discontented and grumbling with every changing form of government; yet, neither the envy of his townsmen, nor the lynx-eyed scrutiny of the police, could fix a flaw upon his transactions, or find a pretext for impeachment.

In the very first years of the present century, soon after Napoleon made himself Emperor, all the turbulent spirits of France thought the occasion a good one to put their discontent into action. Plots and conspiracies were formed, and insurrections planned in weak abundance, and agents and emissaries were at work in various parts of the country. Amongst the deadly and diabolical designs against the person of Napoleon, "The infernal machine" was the most infamous in plan, and the nearest to being effective in execution. Just at this period, Potdevin was observed to be particularly busy. Not in attending to his bar or cellar—for these just then were chiefly left to the care of his buxom and industrious wife, and a very comely and clever girl, called Marguerite, who was at that time about twenty-five years old, half of which had been passed in her present and only service. She had acquired a great hold on the regard of both her master and mistress, so much so, that they seemed to consider her quite as their own child, and it was generally believed, from some hints thrown out by the cautious Potdevin, and more loudly echoed by his wife, that Marguerite was destined for the final possession of the fortune, in the earning of which she was so effectually aiding.

Just previous to this eventful period, Potdevin's affairs had seemed to acquire the perfect consistency of success and wealth. He had completed the purchase of his house and premises in the town, and of the amphibious and more hazardous species of property contained in sundry fishing boats and smuggling vessels. Every thing in the house took a new appearance. All was put in repair; painting, papering, and all the etceteras of ornament were expensively resorted to, many pieces of solid furniture, picked up at sales, were added to the existing stock; and plate and linen were profusely laid in. The cellar, too, was well supplied with wines and brandies, of good growth and prime vintages, and Potdevin's house seemed fairly established as one of the most steady and best in the town. The master piqued himself upon his odd ways. He never made much fuss about the good cheer and superior accommodations of his house, and his humor may be understood by one eccentric whim. He would permit no sign to hang in front of his house, as is general to places which thrive as much by attracting as by paying attention; but in lieu of this common appendage, awung a board, on which was painted,

MOI JE DIA QU' AU BON VIN
IL NE FAUT PAS D'ENSEIGNE.

L. P.

That is to say,

GOOD WINE
NEEDS NO SIGN,

or no *bush*, as our unpoetical proverb has it. Just over the kitchen fire-place, another quaint device was painted,

ON MANGE ICI AUJOURD'HUI POUR DE L'ARGENT, DEMAIN POUR RIEN,

or, as we say, "Pay to-day, trust to-morrow," a more pithy way of expressing the ambiguous sentiment, which only wanted a date affixed to make it binding.

But all the practical pleasantries of Louis Potdevin were coming to an end. He suddenly, as I before stated, gave up "all customs of exercise," and seemed over head and ears immersed in the troubled waters of politics. But he never communicated any of his secret employments even to his wife or Marguerite. He often went out of the house, returned again privately, and was, for hours together, shut up in the green chamber (which he had totally appropriated to himself,) when the customers were all gone away, and his wife and her assistant either in bed, or laudably listening at the key-hole of his door, in vain hopes of embodying into some solid information, the faint whispering which they continually heard between at least two persons.

Matters were going on for some time in this mysterious way, when on the morning of the 23d of November 1805, Louis Potdevin was found dead in his bed. The consternation of Madame and Marguerite was duly expressed in shrieks and exclamations, when, after vain efforts to obtain admittance by fair means, they forced open the door, drew back the green curtains, and discovered the corpse. In

sudden calamities of this kind the course of events is always pretty nearly the same. Great confusion, alarm, and conjecture; surgical examination, official inquiry, the undertaker, the grave-digger, a funeral—and forgetfulness. This process went on with perfect regularity in the case of poor Potdevin. The neighbors came in crowds to the awful scene; horror and indifference, loquacity and silence, shaking of heads, shrugging of shoulders, groans, and sighs, were all profusely displayed, as the spectators varied in degrees of feeling. The authorities and the doctor settled between them, that the deceased was the victim of apoplexy—a mass was said for his soul—his body was laid in the ground—and the wreck of a merchant ship on the coast, and the execution of a criminal in the market-place, were sufficient within a week to turn the tide of public interest into channels quite wide of that which is the subject of our inquiry.

After a few days of violent grief, Madame Potdevin took her station once more at the bar; and Marguerite began to distribute her attention and smiles, more faintly and subdued, but not less interesting to the customers than before her master's death. The many friends of the house made it a point to eat and drink most encouragingly for the interest of the widow; and the spirit-stirring calls for the bar-maid were never more frequent, nor so much so indeed, as in the very first days of mourning.

Our inn was the chief resort of the better class of fishermen, and masters of coasting vessels, smugglers as well as fair traders, besides enjoying the custom of very many of the towns-folk and neighboring farmers, and a fair proportion of the less dignified orders of travellers, who rode on horseback, or rumbled along the roads, in one horsed *cabriolets*, *pataches*, *char-a-bancs*, and such dislocating conveyances. It may be well supposed that among such a crowd of visitors many a various view was taken of the exact position of Madame Potdevin's concerns, as well as those of her handmaid Marguerite. It was well known that Madame had, immediately on her husband's death, become possessed of a very considerable sum of money, besides securities and rights in property to a large amount, the entire of which was without reserve her own. She was a hale, healthy woman of about forty-five, an excellent age in the eye of an insurance office, or of any man likely to fall in love with the probable continuance of a good jointure, and by no means an objection to him who would submit to the incumbrance of a staid and steady woman, at the corpulent season, in consideration of the weighty items, which her property may throw in to balance the account.

Marguerite, on the other hand, was twenty years younger, only inclined to *embonpoint*, active, cheerful, good-looking, and almost sure to be the possessor of all the widow Potdevin's wealth, should the latter remain single, and of a great part of it even should she marry and not have children; and although she promised a continuance of rude health, it was not at her age likely that she ever would be "as well as can be expected." These considerations and calculations, pro and con, produced of course considerable fluctuation in the funds of feelings and tempers which composed the motley com-

binations of character that thronged to the bar, and kitchen, and bed-rooms of our inn. Most of the middle-aged bachelors gave a decided preference to the widow, considering that possession is the very kernel, and expectancy but the outer shell of love ;—and even amongst the younger men, but one or two seemed satisfied to become the heir presumptive of her property in right of her maid. Even these, however, were rejected by Marguerite, who peremptorily declined their addresses, and handed them over to swell the list of her mistress's suitors.

It was thought singular that Marguerite should thus reject her two public admirers ; and the inference was that she had one private lover. It was, however, very hard to find out the truth of this, for she was a close and cautious girl, who held that even tenor of conduct to all her comers which suited her situation so well ; and she kept her own counsel with a sagacity that offered an excellent example to all her neighbors.

The most conspicuous among the avowed admirers of Madame Potdevin, were Monsieur Ambrose, Belpêche, a gardener, Captain Blouffe, a smuggler, and Paul Ricochet, the master of a fishing vessel, the property in which from mast-head to keel, from bowsprit to rudder, had duly devolved to Madame Potdevin as forming part of her late husband's possessions. There were several others whose pretensions quickly faded away before the more substantial claims of the just named candidates. Belpêche was a grey-headed, rosy gilled old fellow, far beyond sixty, a widower without children, well off in the world, having buried his wife, and possessing no other kind of encumbrance. He kept a very tasteful and well assorted nursery-ground, with a pleasure garden attached, at the northern suburb of the town, and there was a spruce and rather priggish air about him, when he came sighing at Madame Potdevin across a huge bunch of ranunculus or stock gilly flower, that marked him for a man of substance and self-consideration.

Captain Blouffe might have been the gardener's son, for aught I know. He was young enough for it, at all events, being not more than forty, a swearing, swaggering bully, as in duty bound to be ; and he had a leering impudence of eye, and a saucy way of putting his quid of tobacco into his mouth, that seemed to announce his conquest to all the by-standers, when he drank the widow's health in a glass of her own brandy.

Paul Ricochet was a different sort of person from either of these. He had not the sleek and smooth-faced suavity of the one, nor the cut-and-thrust swagger of the other. But he had a way with him more like to succeed with the fair and gentle sex. He had a happy mixture of boldness with caution—he knew when to keep aloof, and when to go all lengths—when to coax, and when to command—and, above all, the best qualifications for a lover, gentle or simple, rich or poor, he had the knack of never betraying, by word or look, the secret which should be kept safe, from all but the one to whom it should be no secret. He was in other respects a candid off-hand fellow, but on this one point, of deep impenetrable cunning—and he cherished that most laudable hypoerisy which in such cases is worth all the cardinal virtues combined.

The character borne by Paul for profound discretion made him a favorite among his circle of female friends; and it was long evident that our widow, even before she became one, had looked on him with a most affectionate eye. It was therefore considered pretty certain that when the election of a new husband came to be decided Paul Ricochet would be found to stand at the head of the poll.

The canvass in the meantime went merrily on, on the parts of the gardener and the smuggler. They lost no opportunity of paying their court, in what they respectively thought the best way. Bel-peche gave presents, Blouffe, paid compliments—one sighed forth his passion, the other swore to it. The old man touched the widow's avarice, the younger one flattered her vanity—and these are no doubt the two points with all women of her age, between the attractions of which a suitor may long hang suspended, like the coffin of the prophet. Ricochet, meantime, stood quietly on his course, and, like a skilful angler as he was, he baited his hooks with just such food as he knew most likely to tickle the old woman's fancy and secure her to his purposes. Yet he was too knowing to commit himself with her. He never made a downright declaration; but contented himself with delicate attentions, and general assurances that she had it in her power to make him the happiest of fishermen, &c. All this produced its due effect. The uncertainty of the widow as to his positive designs kept her anxiety alive and did not deaden her regard; while the gardener's sneaking confessions, and the boisterous avowals of the smuggler, tired her of their attachment, before the first could ripen, or the latter be run into harbor, as it might by analogy be imagined.

But in the midst of all these courtships and counter-courtships, the widow, so far from thriving on them, was observed by every body to be in a state of continual depression, to wear a feverish look of anxiety, and to show a nervous shrinking from every mention of the circumstances of her husband's death or even of his name. This for some days excited but little marvel, as she was known to be a shrew woman, who understood what the world expected from her under the circumstances. But when, at the end of a fortnight, so far from the appearance of her suffering wearing off, it was evident that all its symptoms were increased, and that Marguerite as well as her mistress wasted away, looked pale, haggard, and woe-begone, the neighbors began to cogitate on the possible causes of all this; and the customers of the inn assembled there almost as much for gossip at the landlady's expense as for refreshment to her profit.

It certainly seemed very unreasonable for any woman in her circumstances to grow pale and thin, to pass sleepless nights, as she avowed, and lose her appetite as she could not conceal. All the married men agreed that not one of *their* wives would show such obstinate symptoms for a whole fortnight of widowhood; and a few of the bachelors, who had been repulsed by Madame Potdevin and Marguerite, put their heads together to account, if possible, for such an extraordinary combination of events.

One Sunday evening, which was in the early part of the third week after the publican's death, a knot of the aforesaid discarded

ruiors had assembled round a table in a distant corner of the kitchen ; and while apparently discussing the merits of a bottle of *vin ordinaire*, and watching the progress of a game of dominos which two of the party were playing, they gave all their observation to the bar, within which was seated the widow of the woeful countenance, while Marguerite was, with a fatigued and indifferent air, serving the various customers around. The smuggler leaned with his back against the bar counter, his arms crossed, and a cigar in his mouth, puffing a cloud of smoke, which intermixed with sighs, was intended no doubt as symbolical of incense for the widow's shrine. Belpêche was sitting on a chair inside, his cocked hat perched upon his neatly powdered curls, his pig-tail sticking sprucely out behind, the lapel of his green coat decorated with a large bunch of myrtle, his white waistcoat and lace frill all in order, and his black satin breeches, with their shining paste buckles, were contrasted with the broad blue ribbed stockings, meant probably to magnify the proportions of his spindle shanks. Paul Ricochet sat silently on a bench near the fire, but quite within the pale of the widow's jurisdiction, in his blue jacket and trowsers, his red woolen cap, and huge boots gaping in large wrinkles far up his thighs.

"Well, it's an odd thing to me," said a master tailor, one of the junta of observers before mentioned, "how that woman can listen to the addresses of that old cabbage planter, and that goose of a smuggler, only a fortnight after her poor husband had been buried."

"Because she rejected your addresses a week ago, isn't it?" retorted a surly old grocer who sat in the corner. "Poor woman," continued he, "she does *not* listen to their addresses—she's plainly thinking of other matters."

"Ay, that's clear," murmured a tinman, who lived next door to the inn, and who had vainly endeavored to hammer himself into the widow's favor, singing amorous ditties as an accompaniment the whole day long, ever since her husband's death. "That's clear enough, and a troubled conscience she must have, to pine away as she does in spite of every thing done to please her."

"Yes, yes, cried a chorus of the whole party, "there must be something on her conscience."

"Her conscience !" said the grocer, who seemed resolved to be the champion of the widow, "what do you mean ?"

"Why, I mean much more than I choose to say," replied the tinman ; "but this I will say, that Potdevin's death was a sudden and a strange one ; and I might say more if I chose it."

This was, however, *enough*. Ill nature and scandal are not exigent of arguments. They are always ready to take a hint, and require nothing half so strong as 'holy writ' to form a foundation for the structures they raise. In three days from the evening in question, reports and innumers went abroad ; and in two or three more, opinions were freely given that poor Potdevin had come to his death unfairly, and that his wife and her maid had perpetrated the murder ; whether with or without associates, the public mind was not quite made up.

Madame Potdevin and Marguerite, the accused, were, as is usual,

the last persons to hear the accusation. They were arraigned, found guilty, and condemned, to the perfect satisfaction of their neighbors, long before the pestilent breath of calumny had warned them that they were its victims. But the public had on this occasion fair grounds for *suspicion* certainly. There was something mysterious in the whole tenor of Poidevin's conduct just before his death. He had secrets beyond doubt, and companions joined in them, be those companions whom they might; and from mysterious combinations, dark results must be expected. His death was sudden; and from the hurried way in which posthumous inquests are slurred over in France, it was not impossible in a case of this kind that 'strangulation' should have stood in the place of 'apoplexy,' in the magistrate's report. And in addition to the widow's and Marguerite's deep suffering, so charitably construed into direct evidence of guilt, the neighboring tinman before mentioned, gave a decided intimation of his belief that the inn was haunted by the ghost of its murdered master. He had come to this conclusion from the fact of his having heard, by a close application of his ear to the adjoining wall, sundry unaccountable night noises, proceeding, of course, from the troubled spirit, independent of the sighs and groans of the repentant woman, who suffered under its visitations.

CHAPTER IV.

Every trivial circumstance gives weight to calumny, and several concurrent facts were at this time remarked. But the women were seen to go much more frequent to church than they had ever been accustomed to; and the widow particularly was observed to give large sums in charity, to attend repeatedly at the confessional; while a succession of masses were subscribed to and regularly performed, nominally for the repose of her husband's soul; but it was shrewdly suspected, more with a view to the pardon of her own.

General inferences only could be drawn from these facts. More particular proofs were called for. A strict scrutiny on the inn and its inmates was the consequence; and a few nights more brought to light the circumstance of a man, muffled in a cloak, coming secretly to the suspected house a little before midnight, after the customers had all retired. He was cautiously admitted by Marguerite, and a careful observance of the windows by the party without showed them that the green chamber, that in which poor Poidevin breathed his last, was lighted up, a most uncommon circumstance; and a hundred strange conclusions were formed upon this mysterious event. But matters went on just as before, nothing positive taking place to criminate the suspected women but their *looks*, that false evidence on which many an unjust judgment is pronounced.

Now, to put my readers out of pain, or at least to place the characters of two innocent women out of jeopardy, I must say at once that they had positively nothing to do with the assumed murder, directly or indirectly. But it is very certain that they did suffer dreadfully; almost ever since they discovered the blackened face of the corpse staring behind the green bed curtains, by all those appalling noises, which weaken echo at midnight, harrowing the consciences of the criminal, and thrilling through the hearts of even the guiltless.

The very night of the day on which the publican was laid in his grave, when the solitude of death itself seemed on the house, the widow, lying sadly in her bed (while Marguerite slumbered disturbedly in the same room,) distinctly heard low sighs and groans, proceeding from the green chamber, which was at the opposite side of the corridor, on which her bed-room opened. Not being of any remarkable weakness of mind, but perhaps the contrary, she endeavored to persuade herself that it was but her fancy that was at work. She had her share of superstition, however, and she piously repeated her prayers to the Virgin, and her own especial saint, without disturbing her tired and sleepy attendant. That night passed over; but the next brought a repetition of the awful sounds. Terrified now in downright earnest, and anxious to have her apprehensions confirmed or put to rest, she called in a half whisper to Marguerite, who occupied a bed beside her's.

"Marguerite, Marguerite! are you awake?"

"I am afraid I am, Madame."

"Do you hear any thing?"

"I hope not."

"But what do you think?"

"Oh, Madame, I am too frightened to think?"

"Christ preserve us!"

"And the Virgin!"

"And Saint Fredegonde!"

"Amen!"

And a loud and voluble repetition of the due number of *Paters* and *Aves* succeeded in silencing the indistinct causes of alarm. A third night's repetition of these awful warnings was alone wanting to confirm the belief of Madame Potdevin that her husband's spirits was not yet at rest. The third night came, and with it the so much dreaded sounds. And from that night, might be fairly traced the perceptible misery of appearance, the extravagant donations, the supererogatory masses, and all the other symptoms which drew down the observation of the world.

Madame Potdevin, being, as was before stated, a knowing, clever sort of a woman, began to open an account of regular calculation, between her fears and her profits; and Marguerite, from a perfect sympathy of interest, entered fully into her mistress's views. They were both actually dying by inches of affright and suffering; yet they most enduringly bore up against it all, sooner than, by making known the fact of the house being haunted, utterly ruin its reputation, and cause it to be wholly deserted, the certain consequence, as

they justly foresaw. It has been seen that the tavern and coffee-house department of the establishment, found no abatement of custom. The eating and drinking went on as merrily, or more so than ever. But no traveller had as yet occupied a bed, since the recent awful catastrophe. Although the mistress and maid, whom we may almost consider as joint hostesses, suffered terrors indistinguishable in the endurance of their nightly torment, they rather discouraged for awhile any persons from sleeping at the inn, lest the fatal secret might be prematurely betrayed, for they trusted to the means employed for getting rid of the evil completely. But when, night after night, and week after week, in spite of prayers, and masses, and confessions, the same frightful noises disturbed them they resolved to make one confident to the sad secret, and they honestly told the Cure, of their parish, the cause of their distress. Having thus unbosomed themselves, they had half got rid of their fears, and they were almost disposed to join in opinion with the incredulous priest, when he laughed at their recital, and told them they were a pair of fools. He, however, agreed to their request that he should watch one night in the haunted room, and use all the means which religion could afford to quiet the perturbed spirit. He accordingly came secretly (as he thought) to the inn, but we have seen that he was watched; and his proceedings having gone regularly on without harm or hindrance, he left the house as he came to it, confirmed in the belief that the women were the dupes of some delusion or some trick.

Madame Potdevin and Marguerite strove to persuade themselves that they thought with him, but the next night brought back the sounds of alarm, and the renewal of their terrors. They were then convinced that there was no *delusion*—but they did begin to imagine that there might be some *trick*. Somewhat quieted by this notion, they set themselves to a regular task of observation, and they soon noticed a continued train of circumstances, which led to the belief that they had been dupes of a very impure mortality, instead of those ghostly visitations they had imagined. They now remarked that every morning some article of food, left unlocked up on the preceding night, disappeared with wondrous regularity. Bread, cheese, and other viands, whether fish or flesh, were sure to be carried in small quantities away. Cats and rats were in their turn suspected of these paltry depredations; but a little reflection caused their acquittal of the charge, for it was impossible that they could produce the terrifying sounds which were the accompaniments to such performances. Then again, it appeared unlikely that such ignoble pilfering could be the sole object of those successive attempts. The property of the house was untouched. Spoons, and forks, and every other portable object of value, were carefully counted and found safe. Could all this be then the persevering malice of some enemy, or the wantonness of some thoughtless friend, merely put in practice to frighten its victim? But by whom *could* it be practiced? Who could thus attain free entrance to the house, the doors of which were so regularly locked? The women inquired of each other and of themselves—and the debate ended in their being unwillingly forced to

suspect Francois, the lame and purblind hostler, of being the author of these pranks, for some object, the truth of which lay in some well too deep for *their* fathoming.

It was, therefore, decided that he should be carefully examined, and keenly questioned; but on the very morning fixed for this inquisition, Francois made his appearance before his mistress and Marguerite, and very bluntly told them that, sorry as he was for it, he was forced to quit the service in which he was beginning to grow grey. Startled at this announcement, and wondering how he could have divined their suspicions, and even more than anticipated their intentions, the women eyed him keenly—but discovered nothing at all like guilt. Madame asked him, with feigned indifference, what could have caused so sudden and unprovoked a resolution on his part.

"Because," replied he, "I am worn and wasted to death—and you yourselves the same;—because my poor master was murdered, and the house is haunted by his ghost?"

The abrupt and savage tone of this reply made the women start and shudder. Francois seemed to remark those symptoms with a suspicious air; and he cut short all further interloction by a brief statement that from the time of his master's death he had been incessantly tormented by night noises in the outhouse where he slept, or attempted to sleep; that the few horses which had been under his care showed evident proofs of the fear and uneasiness which all dumb animals display at the times when spirits are abroad; and, finally, he demanded in a decisive tone the arrears of his wages, and a certificate of his faithful services. Madame Potdevin terrified by the dread of the effect which this sudden measure might produce on the public mind, to the certain detriment of her business, and the probable injury of her character, used the most cogent arguments which her knowledge of human nature, and that of Francois, suggested, to change the hostler's resolution. But all unavailing, although seconded bravely by the eloquent energy of Marguerite. Francois insisted on his point being conceded, and he carried it of course. The last request of his late mistress, on his quitting the house, was that he would keep profoundly secret the circumstances which caused his removal—and Francois did not fail to treasure up the recollection of this anxiety for concealment, which he could attribute to but one cause. The fact was, that this poor fellow had been himself, several years before, severely smitten by the striking charms of Mademoiselle Marguerite, but his passion being quite ridiculous in her eyes, it had met with no return but contempt. This produced that natural retort of feeling, dislike on his part; and he came readily into the opinion of the neighboring tinman as to the mysterious noises which were so frequently heard by both. The separation of Francois from the old firm of which he had so long been an humble partner, condensed the vapoury mass of conjecture which had been so long afloat, and it took the shape of a lowering cloud of obloquy on the objects over whom it hovered.

In the meantime, poor Madame Potdevin and Marguerite, so far from being in any way relieved from their apprehensions, had them

redoubled by the conviction that the hostler was innocent ; and looking at their persecution either as human or supernatural, they had but a duplicate of perplexity and alarm. They however, resolved to make strenuous efforts to baffle their tormentor should mortal appetite be really a matter of importance to him. They consequently put every remnant of victuals under lock and key ; and the night of Francois' departure they carefully bolted and barred every entrance to the house, except the private door leading to the green-chamber from the back stairs—but they durst not approach through the awful premises. That was, however, pretty clearly the vulnerable point for either ghost or robber, and that very night the noises were renewed. Groans, lamentations, and even, as the affrighted women thought, murmured maledictions came in hollow tones through the panels and wainscot ; and to complete the horror of the haunted hostess, she found on the kitchen table, when she descended the next morning, a paper, on which was traced in characters of *blood* the following words :

“ RASH WOMAN !

“ Durst thou control the lawful master of this house and thee ? Venture no more to thwart my desires, or dread the vengeance of

THY HUSBAND'S GHOST.”

This dreadful warning was the climax of the widow's tortures. The cup of her sufferings was above the brim ; she could hear no more ; but determined, with the full concurrence of Marguerite, to make known the state of facts to a few intimate friends, and take decisive measures for the discovery of the horrid case, be it what it might.

CHAPTER V

The close-drawn circle of the widow Potdevin's regard included only those who, as she thought, gave her a share of theirs. This was a narrow, but a natural method of regulating her friendships and was certainly less likely to produce disappointment, than a more profuse expenditure of benevolence would have been. Half-a-dozen persons, at the utmost, composed the select junta in which the widow would consent to repose any confidence. Belpeche, Blouffe, and Ricochet formed half this council ; and Marguerite, with a couple of gossiping female neighbors, completed it.

The avowed object of the meeting being, on the one hand to make an awful disclosure, and on the other to afford advice and assistance in a serious emergency, much gravity and importance was carried in every countenance, and great curiosity in every mind—but one. That one was Paul Ricochet's, who knew very well before hand

all that was about to be divulged, and made light, or pretended to do so, of all the widow's and her bar-maid's fears.

The assemblage took place, on the very night of the day when Madame Potdevin discovered the sanguinary threat before copied, in the little inner room, the penetralia of the pot-house, from which the widow could still, in the midst of her disclosure, keep a sharp eye on the customers in the kitchen, and lend a ready ear to their calls. The business of the meeting was opened by succinct detail in Madame Potdevin's best manner of story-telling, of all the mysterious circumstances preceding her husband's death, and of the still more horrifying combinations which followed that startling event. With low voice and suppressed utterance she spoke of the nightly visitings, while her auditors, (with one exception,) gave a nervous attention, and seemed, like the speaker, afraid of awakening the echoes of the green chamber just over their heads. The few customers had dropped one by one away; the night waned fast; and at length came the grand point of information, cogitation and dread—the terrific denouncement of that very morning—the bloody billet! At sight of this appalling document, a thrill of horror ran through the audience—all but Ricochet. While the countenances of the others betrayed the curdling of their best blood, his only showed an incredulous cure of lip. The women were horror-struck, Belpoehe shook in every point, Blouffe twisted and turned from side to side, coughed and swaggered, and cursed a little; and the whole party bore testimony to the blood traced characters being almost a fac-simile of the strangled inn keeper's hand-writing, while even Paul Ricochet acknowledged them to show a spectral sort of resemblance.

Next came the expression of the various opinions on the case. The women were decidedly of opinion that it was the ghost, and nothing but the ghost, that had written the paper; and they counselled the widow to submit without resistance to the exactions demanded, without any impious efforts at examination of their propriety—to give the best in the house to satisfy the cravings of the spectre—and then to abandon the house itself, and its unearthly occupant for ever.

This unsatisfactory and absurd advice was cut short by Blouffe, who could not restrain his impatience nor his temper. He burst into a whirlwind of passion—abused the women as croaking and cowardly—swore a dozen furious oaths—disclaimed all belief in ghosts and goblins—wiped the perspiration from his forehead—and observing through the window that the finger of the white-faced dial in the kitchen was placed perpendicularly against the nose of the sun, indicating the near approach of midnight (the very hour when the noises had hitherto commenced,) the captain took up his hat and short cloak, and protested against staying longer on such a foolish consultation.

He was however, in his turn interrupted by Paul Ricochet, who seized him by the arm, and said, with his peculiar and not very satisfactory smile,

"Nay but Captain, you must not abandon us this way—just at the hour when the ghost is about to visit us!"

The women screamed, as if Paul had uttered a blasphemy; Bel-

peche exclaimed against the indecorum and indecent levity of the expression; Blouffe swore a huge oath, and prepared to rush out of the room. Paul Ricochet laughed outright, with an air of incredulous gaiety which made the whole party tremble. At the same instant the kitchen clock struck twelve—and the twang of the last stroke had not died away, when a low deep groan was distinctly heard to proceed from the green room above stairs, accompanied by a rumbling sound, such as has been the sure announcement of an unquiet spirit, time immemorial.

A thrill of horror ran through the assemblage. The women hid their faces; Blouffe shook as if seized by an ague fit; Belpeche alone recovered energy enough to speak.

"This is too bad," said he, addressing Paul, "too bad, Mister Ricochet—this is your doing—you have some accomplice in this vile trick, and some design too deep for me to fathom. I denounce you to this amiable lady, widow Potdevin, and before her friends here assembled, as an impostor, a trickster, a juggler!—you may sneer and laugh if you like it, Sir,"—continued the agitated gardner, looking irefully at the object of his accusation—but there was neither sneer nor laugh on the face of Paul Ricochet. A pallid hue had overspread it, and he appeared either overwhelmed with guilt, or seized with fear. Belpeche did not hesitate in attributing his visible emotion to the first cause, from the very natural delight which he felt at his own sagacity having been the stimulant to which it was owing.

"Look at him, Madame Potdevin; look at him, ladies; look at him, Marguerite; look at him, Captain Blouffe!" cried the exhilarated Belpeche. Every eye was turned towards Paul; but before any one had time to fix its scrutinizing glances on him, a groan louder than the first, and a repetition of the rumbling, drew off the attention of all, and filled the party with renewed alarm.

"Yes, yes," cried Belpeche, "it is clear that his accomplice can time these interruptions to save him from condemnation."

"It must be so," exclaimed Blouffe, with a tremendous oath, recovering his courage and clear-sightedness; "it must be so! Paul Ricochet, this is all your doing!"

"Paul, Paul!" whispered Madame Potdevin, tenderly incredulous, "can it be possible?"

"Can it be possible?" echoed the two female neighbors.

"No, I am sure it can *not*, and that it is *not*," said Marguerite, briskly. "I'll warrant it that Paul knows no more of the trick, if it be one, than Monsieur Belpeche himself; and is no more capable of such a scandalous proceeding than Captain Blouffe is."

"By the —," blustered Blouffe, about to utter some terrific adjuration.

"I'll tell you —," stammered Belpeche, beginning some new tirade. But they were stopped short by Paul Ricochet, who stood up with a resolute demeanor, walked quickly to the door of the room, which he locked firmly and put the key in his pocket, and then advancing into the middle of group, he said,—

"Gentlemen and ladies, all this is going too far. It must have an

end, and speedily. I confess myself not surprised at your suspicions, but I hope no one that knows me will calmly believe me guilty of such base conduct, from any interested motive. I was, till now, I acknowledge it, quite incredulous—I laughed at these alarms. But I am not now disposed to do so. That something is at work, human or supernatural, is clear. I protest myself wholly innocent of all share in these doings; but I am accused, and the truth must come out. Therefore no one, man or woman, quits this room till all are agreed as to some measures for sifting this mystery, and discovering its truth. That I am resolved on."

The utterance of this oration was followed by a very serious debate. The first thing proposed, or rather commanded, by Paul was an immediate search in the room above. His orders were, after some demurring, obeyed; and, followed by the whole party, armed as best they could supply themselves with shovels, tongs, and candlesticks, he boldly ascended to the green chamber. The women all stood trembling at the door; Captain Blouffe let his candle fall and be extinguished—by accident of course—and ran down stairs to re-light it, although there were four or five others close by; and Paul and Belpeche with a tolerable air of courage, went in, and carefully examined every part of the room, not even omitting the fatal bed; but they found nothing. The door was closed and the party descended, Blouffe leading the way, politely leading the ladies down stairs and Paul bringing up the rear with an air of dissatisfied abstraction, either very natural or very well acted.

Once more seated in the little room below, the consultation was renewed with increased energy. Many plans were proposed, many rejected; an avowal of the circumstances, the calling in of the police, and such like public displays, were deliberately voted to be dangerous to the reputation of the house, and likely to defeat every effort for discovery, by putting the ghost on its guard. A quiet but energetic system of watching was resolved on, as best adapted to catch the impostors, if such were at work, and it was finally decided, that the three men present, the rival suitors, the chosen counsellors of Madame Potdevin, were successively to keep watch, until the mystery was one way or another unravelled.

Lots were drawn by the three to decide the order of precedence, in which their watchings were to take place. Madame Potdevin cut three pieces of coarse brown paper of different lengths, the shortest of which was to entitle the drawer to the enviable preference for the first night's duty in the widow's service; and she firmly closed her hand, as the aspirants stretched out theirs.

Belpeche, half trembling, shut his eyes, drew first—and pulled the shortest. Blouffe tried next, and turned his head aside, unwilling to look his fate in the face. He had taken the second shortest, and as the widow opened her hand, and gave the last and longest lot to Paul Ricochet, a well pleased twinkle played in her eye, at the good luck which removed her favorite the farthest from the dangerous trial.

The ceremony being concluded, each man put on his best coat of valor. Belpeche avowed himself ready for duty for the next night,

Blouffe (hoping that Belpeche's success might save him from the necessity of coming into action at all) swore, that but for thwarting the destiny, which fixed the lots, he would himself undertake the morrow's watch, and settle the business wholly by his own exertions. Ricochet talked very little, and only expressed his wish that all might terminate well for all parties.

And now, to give a proper solemnity to the proceeding, to inspire the adventurous knights with still greater ardor in the enterprise, and to display her own liberality, the widow Potdevin solemnly declared, that feeling her lone and unprotected state, and appreciating the service thus undertaken on her behalf, she had decidedly made up her mind to confer upon the successful assailant of her midnight persecutor, the sum of ten thousand francs in cash, accompanied by whatever other reward it was in her power to give—and that he might decide on asking.

The last words of her declaration were uttered in a faltering voice, with averted head and downcast eyes, the latter taking a general glance at her own fat and comely person reflected in the looking glass, and as if she were conscious of the views of the trio around her, and that *that* alone could be the object of their hopes."

"Oh, generous woman! sighed forth old Belpeche, fragrantly.

"Bravo, widow!" cried Blouffe, familiarly slapping his hard broad fist upon her shoulder.

"Do you say nothing, Paul?" asked the widow, in a subdued and internarrying tone.

"Why, Madame," replied he, "you know I am a man of few words, and I quite understand the force of the frank declaration you have made to these gentlemen and myself. I am sure you intend doing what you promise, and I am *very* sure we are all three very happy in the hope it holds out to him who may have the good luck to be entitled to claim it. But ladies, you know Madame, sometimes change their minds, and may be it would be as well for all parties if you would put your promise in writing, and get it regularly attested before a notary to-morrow. You will pardon my boldness, I am sure, and not mistake my motives."

"I do pardon you freely, Paul," replied the widow, "and I approve the prudence which has always characterized you. I willingly accede to your proposal, and the paper shall be signed to-morrow."

Bursts of acknowledgement from the gardener and the smuggler, who each hoped himself the winner of the prize, although deading the risk to be encountered, and a quiet and contented smile from Paul Ricochet, ended the conference. Morning dawned ere the party would venture to separate; the widow's friends stole away unobserved from the house, and she and Marguerite lay down in their beds, to ruminate on the past, and snatch a few hours' repose to enable them to meet the future with renovating strength.

CHAPTER VI.

The following day was ushered in with much fidgettiness on the part of Belpêche, and a rather uncomfortable state of feeling to the rest of the combination of ghost catchers. It was not that Belpêche was actually a believer in ghosts, but he was a cautious old fellow, and thought it foolish to trust his own incredulity too far; and, like most people who believe those things, either in whole or in part, he had, perhaps, good reasons for his fears. He therefore made it a rule never to walk through a church-yard at night, or to speak alightingly of supernatural appearances, not to put out the candle until he was fairly under the blankets, always pulling his legs into bed with infinite spirit, lest something more might be lurking under it than met the mortal eye. As it grew dark, therefore, on this important day, he felt any thing but philosophically indifferent, and a compunctions shivering once or twice came over him, at the thought that he was perhaps braving some supernatural power. But his better man at length prevailed over these treacherous misgivings, and he returned to the last night's conviction that the whole affair was a piece of human, or rather inhuman waggery, or if effected from serious motives, that if it was a device of Paul Ricochet to frighten the widow into his possession. This last notion roused up the little remnant of Belpêche's courage, and he trudged off towards the scene of adventure, determined to run every risk in order to thwart the unfair play thus put in practice by his rival.

When he arrived at the inn, he found the rest of the allies assembled in the little parlor, quite as punctual as if it had been their own turn of watch. Blouffe was swaggering up and down the room, and offering wages of rum, gin, brandy, tobacco, and English muslin (favorite articles of his) that Belpêche would blink the undertaking and leave them in the lurch. Marguerite, who seemed alone to uphold the balance of equity, stood stoutly up for the gallant gardener, and the entrance of the old man proved that he had as much blood in him as she gave him credit for.

His arrival was hailed with many cordial acknowledgments of his bravery and anticipations of his prowess, by the two friendly female neighbors, but none of the others seemed much exhilarated by his punctuality; and the widow in particular, looked sulky and disappointed, for in fact, she had reckoned, when her first fears for Ricochet's safety had somewhat subsided, that the cowardice of his rivals would have kept them from the undertaking, and left him a clear field for the acquirement of the prize she intended for him.

Blouffe was still more displeased, for had the gardener forfeited his pledge of precedence, he meant to have protested against the whole arrangement as null; but now he had no excuse for not going through his share of the adventure, and therefore he was as dogged and sullen as any poltroon could be.

Paul Ricochet had confidently reckoned on the timidity of the gar-

dener for making him forfeit his engagement. He feared that the cunning of the old man might discover the secret before he could come into action himself. As to Captain Blouffe he had no apprehension of his effecting any thing but a retreat.

Marguerite was influenced by feelings of her own, and altogether the gardener was not very enthusiastically received. That was a pity, for in his then frame of mind he required encouragement, and he felt his drooping spirit thirst for a draught of that moral alcohol which he expected in vain. Baffled in that hope, he contented himself with a glass of cogniac, and Captain Blouffe took another, just for company's sake, and for the liberal purpose of drinking success to his rival. This he did from his heart, for he began to wish the widow at the very devil for having engaged him in the adventure; and he was little less severe on himself for having embarked in it.

The clock told half past eleven. All preparations were made. Belpeche affectionately saluted the four females, wrapped himself in his warm great coat of brown camlet, put on his white cotton night-cap, placed captain Blouffe's cutlass under his arm, took a well trimmed lamp in his hand, and with the air of a man about to be turned off a scaffold, he tottered up towards the green chamber, for there it was resolved that he should keep watch, meeting the ghost (or the imposter) as it were upon the very threshold of the premises it had hitherto with impunity invaded. Paul Ricochet propped up the old gardener at one side, and Blouffe promised to do so on the other; but before he reached the upper landing place he contrived to let the cork fall out of the bottle of brandy, which he carried for Belpeche's comfort, and while he fumbled about in search of it, quaffing copiously all the time Belpeche and his less cowardly companion had fairly entered the room.

A fire was soon blazing, Paul having during the day placed the faggots and the more combustible brushwood in the chimney. Belpeche dropped shivering into an arm chair by the fireside, and Paul delighted at the exhibition of terror before him, placed on the table the leg of a potted goose, some bread and cheese, and a black pudding, as the very best sort of ingredients for exorcising a ghost or exercising a human being. Blouffe peeped sneakingly in, with the half emptied brandy bottle, and soon sneaked out again, as spiritless as the half he had emptied. Ricochet wished the doughty sentinel good night, with an air of exaggerated apprehension; and faithfully promising to come to his relief, at the least alarm, he retreated quickly down stairs, and took up his station, as agreed upon with Captain Blouffe and the women in the little parlor.

The nervous anxiety which prevailed below, and the agonizing agitation which reigned above, were soon, not relieved, but replaced by the visitation so dreaded and so dreadful. One—two—three!—seven—eight—nine—!—*twelve!* struck the clock; and "*Twelve!*" in full chorus exclaimed the occupants of the parlor, when one ghostly groan came down through the chinks of the ceiling, followed by a feeble scream from Belpeche's terror-parched throat—and in an instant after, a crash was heard, as if some heavy substance had fallen on the floor above.

The women all screamed, and half of them hid themselves under the table. But the other two, Madame Potdevin and Marguerite, showed more presence of mind and body. The first threw himself upon Paul Ricochet (who, armed with a long rusty rapier, was valiantly rushing up stairs,) and with loud vociferations declared that he should not run the risk of an encounter with the mysterious enemy above. Marguerite flung herself upon Captain Blouffe, not for the purpose of detention, but to push him towards the door, from which he most restively hung back. He had boldly pulled his brass barrelled pistol out of his belt, and cocked it, but he himself showed nothing of the same readiness to go off.

"Go on, Captain, go on!" cried Marguerite, shoving him forward with hands and knees.

"Who the devil is holding me there?" exclaimed the captain plunging backwards and laying a strong posterior emphasis on every word.

"You shan't, you shan't, sobbed the widow, hugging Paul in her arms.

"For God's sake, let me go! Monsieur Belpêche will be murdered!" roared Paul; and at length, by a bold plunge, he escaped from the widow's embraces, rushed towards the door, and darted up the stairs, lugging Blouffe along with him, by the collar of his coat.

When they reached the door of the green chamber, Ricochet burst it open with his foot, and Blouffe, in his tremor, fired off his pistol close to his companion's head, singeing the fur of his cap, and sending a bullet whizzing through one of the bed-posts. Paul sprang forward, and Blouffe gaining courage "at the sound himself had made," and ashamed to be passed by the very women, who now came clamoring up the stairs, followed into the room, and assisted Paul in picking up the astounded gardener, who lay on his face on the floor. The table was upset beside him, and every appearance of the preparations for his supper removed.

Paul having satisfied himself that Belpêche was alive and unwounded, except in spirit, handed him over to the cares of Blouffe and the women, and proceeded to search in every possible direction for some traces of the enemy. He examined well, above in the garrets, down in the cellars, and in every other nook and corner of the house; then took a careful survey of the outer premises, and left no place untried, where necessity, the mother of invention, or fear the father of devotion, might have forced a man to hide. His search was all in vain, and he returned into the house baffled and disatisfied.

The gardener's account of the apparition, which had nearly terrified him to death, was most appalling. He could not describe it, he said, for he acknowledged that the moment he heard its first groan, as it entered the green chamber, he fell down flat on his face, and never ventured to look up till Paul Ricochet came to his relief. But he was certain that it must have been something very dreadful, to have produced such an astonishing effect:—and he did not venture to doubt its being supernatural, from that very circumstance, and from the strong smell of brimstone left behind it, when it vanished in a flash of lightning, and took its leave with a clap of thunder.

The discharge of Captain Blouffe's brass barralled pistol, satisfactorily explained the latter phenomenon of Paul's understanding and the disappearance of the viands, which none but himself had remarked, convinced him that the player of these pranks was at any rate a very hungry or ill-fed fellow. More could not for the present be ascertained; and the party broke up, agreeing that on the following night, some more decisive precautions were to be taken; and fixing the hour of meeting in the little parlor, at somewhat earlier than before, to allow of a full consultation on the measure to be pursued.

The following night, at between nine and ten o'clock, a man was observed walking too and fro in apparent agitation, on the beach of the outer harbor of the town. He was wrapped in a course boat cloak. On his head was a red woollen night-cap. He wore the large wrinkled boots peculiar to sea-faring men. He had a lighted cigar constantly in his mouth, except when he took it out for a moment to make way for the neck of a leather-covered brandy-flask. Yet notwithstanding all this, and although the night was by no means cold for the season, this solitary personage was observed by several passers by to tremble and shake by fits; and to some half dozen friendly how do you do's?" he only replied by a chattering of the teeth, and a half-choked articulation, which belied the "very well, thank ye," that he meant to utter.

The man was Captain Clouffe, and the cause of his agitation was fear.

I have passed over, without an attempt at describing it, the torturing day he passed, because it was indescribable; and I only glance at his night terrors, because they form a necessary part and portion of the horrors of my story. Blouffe paced up down the shingly strand, looking westward in vain, for courage from the blustering tide that sent its rampant waves high up the mound. He thought that the ghost of Cardinal Richelieu was abroad, and sporting over this huge monument of his genius. He next turned his eyes desparingly towards the east, to see what inspiration might be gathered from the moon, just then rising. It was in its third quarter, ghastly to look at and mishapen withal, oblong and awkward, giving the figure of an ill cut cheese, of a dusky pale complexion—and it seemed to flounder (the wrong side uppermost) in a sea of mist and murkiness, like a porpoise rolling over a sandy shoal.

"Worse and worse!" thought Captain Blouffe, "every thing is disheartening and ominous! What is to be done?" His cogitations resolved themselves at length into the affirmative of his wishes, triumphing over the fears which put a strong negative upon every proposition for courageous exertion. But he struck a long and well considered account between the risk and the reward of what he was about to undertake; and after all, it was not wonderful that the comely widow and her heavy pockets, should have weighed down her side of the balance, and made the flimsy and vapory spectre finally kick the beam. It was probably the last quaffed mouthful of brandy that produced this effect. Blouffe turned, briskly towards the place of rendezvous; but as he put the empty flask into the side pocket of his cloak, he could not help casting a wistful look at his own little cutter, dancing lightly on the bosom of the waves, and he half wished himself once more out at sea, instead of in the harbor of matrimony with the widow Potdevin. He felt,

however, too far advanced in the adventure to draw back with any chance of preserving his character; and he walked straight into the little parlor, where the party was really assembled, with as bold an air as he could muster for the occasion.

The arrangements for the night's proceedings were, after some deliberation, finally settled. Blouffe declared point blank that he would not watch in the green chamber, and he defended this resolution plausibly enough by reasoning on the greater chances of entrapping the invader by luring him father into the bowels of the house, and thus letting the burglary be more thoroughly effected. As he was the most prominent actor for that night, he assumed all the importance of this brief authority, and he traced the order of the operations, with as much pompous solemnity as if he had been a corporation magistrate fixing the order of a procession.

The widow, with her handmaid Marguerite and her two faithful friends, were committed to the quiet concealment of her own bed-chamber, with positive directions to all four to hold their tongues as inactive as possible, that by their self-violence in keeping silent for awhile no suspicion might be entertained by the intruder, should he project another attempt on the premises that night. Belpêche (the strong weakness of whose timidity was overcome by the more powerful curiosity of seeing the result of his rival's adventure,) and Paul Ricochet, who calmly submitted to Blouffe's directions, were stationed well armed in the passage leading directly from the *portecochère* to the kitchen, the door of which was to be kept carefully shut. But previously to the different parties taking possession of their posts in accordance with this distribution, the Captain himself entered into the full occupation of *his*—which was no other than within the body of the tall clock-case, through the oval window of which he could command an ample view of all that took place in the kitchen, and where he felt himself perfectly secure from all suspicion on the part of the expected interloper, even supposing, according to Belpêche's hypothesis, that it was no ghost but an accomplice of Ricochet. This allotment of positions, and his own in particular, was the grand secret which the Captain had carefully kept to himself; and thus placed, he felt a momentary satisfaction which he little expected to have enjoyed on this perilous occasion. Having made up his courage to the sticking place, he squeezed himself into the clock-case, and with some difficulty, notwithstanding his having thrown off the incumbrance of his cloak and jacket; and he lovingly hugged his cutlass in his arms, and held his pistol ready cocked in his hand, to fire right through at the very first symptoms of the midnight visitant.

Having received the farewell of his friends, the door was shut upon him, and he was solemnly jamed in with feelings of intense agony little less than might be supposed to seize on a vow-breaking nun, built up in her niche of punishment. His dusky face looked awfully ill through the glass window of the clock-case; and the ghastly dial-plate seemed to grin with satisfaction at having acquired so fitting a companion.

It now wanted a quarter of an hour to twelve. The associates retired to their quarters—and Blouffe was "left alone with his glory."

Ricochet clapped his ear occasionally to the kitchen door, but heard only the awful ticking of the clock and the deep breathing of the captain, with an attempt at a colloquial kind of cough now and then, to keep his heart up. A quarter of an hour of fearful expectation passed over—and then the solemn burring of the striking-chain slowly announced the elevation of the hammer which was to sound the peal of midnight upon the bell of the clock. Down it came—twelve terrible strokes, every one of which tingled through and through the imprisoned Blouffe. The echo of the last stroke died away—and its faithful response, a deep and hollow groan, was immediately heard to proceed from the green-chamber. Ricochet grasped his weapon firmly—Belpeche's had nearly fallen through his trembling fingers. Both listened with acute attention, and they thought they heard a gurgling murmur from the Captain's throat, while the clock case sounded in tremulous vibration, as if its tenant shook in every joint. Then again all was hushed. In an instant more a cautious footstep was heard, descending the stairs and pacing the kitchen. Ricochet's feelings were wound tightly up; Belpeche's slipped loosely down. Both stood and eagerly listened for Blouffe's assault, ready to run, the one in upon the ghost, and the other out into the street. But no assault was sounded—no alarm made—and in a minute or two the retiring footsteps came lightly on the listeners' ears—and all was still.

Paul Ricochet could stand this no longer. He opened the kitchen door, and fiercely rushed in; but no enemy, bodily or spiritual, was there. The viands which were laid as a lure upon the table had disappeared, but every thing else looked in *statu quo*. A sudden misgiving shot through him as to the safety of Captain Blouffe, and he thought it possible, after all, that some foul fiend had visited the place, and carried away the unhappy smuggler in his retreat. He quickly opened the door of the clock-case, and was nearly as much shocked as if Blouffe had not been there, by his body falling out out against him, stiff, motionless, and as he thought, dead; while the pistol and cutlass dropped clattering on the floor. Nothing could be more ghastly than the captain's whitey-brown face contrasted with the dazzling scarlet of his woollen cap; and as Paul dragged him towards the fire-place where the night lamp stood, his long boots came half off his legs and trailed after him, giving to his figure a most unnatural, or at best, a most corpse-like appearance of stiff and outstretched length.

"Monsieur Belpeche, Monsieur Belpeche! come here for God's sake!" cried Paul, while he almost strangled Blouffe in attempting to untie the knot of his black neck handkerchief.

"I am here!" answered Belpeche, from the gate, which he was vainly endeavoring to drag open, it having been cautiously bolted and locked by Paul and Marguerite.

"A jug of water, a jug of water!" cried Paul; and no sooner had he said the word, than a very large jug full of the pure element was flung in the captain's face by the liberal hand of Marguerite, who had rushed down stairs, with the widow and the other woman, as soon as the alarm was sounded by Paul. This profuse ablution made

Blouffe start suddenly into life : and Marguerite seeing that he did live, turned all her readiness of thought to the prevention of the disclosures which Belpeche was on the point of proclaiming. She ran quickly to the gate, and seizing him by the powdered tail, she led him backwards into the kitchen, despite his screaming and struggling ; and he was with considerable difficulty at length convinced that it was under the hands of Marguerite that he suffered this infliction and that he was once again in the midst of his coadjutors and allies.

Blouffe, after a few minutes, recovered his recollection, and with it a portion of his wonted impudence. Seeing himself to be safe and sound, he scouted all notion of fear—swore that he had only fallen asleep and that he dreamt he had seen the devil. More he could not tell ; and thus finished the second night's watching, leaving the affair still more perplexed and inexplicable than ever.

CHAPTER VI.

The whole matter began now, however, to wear an extremely serious aspect. Whatever had been comical in the mishaps of the widow's two discomfited lovers was to be the last of that species of interest in this strange affair. The mystery was, in another trial, destined to be solved ; and, as my readers have, I am sure, wished if not anticipated, it was fated that Paul Ricochet was to have the honor of bringing to light as much of the secret as ever could be discovered.

The thousand tongues of rumour had been during the days last described extremely busy in La Rochelle. They had insinuated themselves into the mouths of all the babblers whose palates have a natural instinct to be so furnished. All other topics of scandalous report were for the time abandoned, and the strange secrecy that hung over the widow Potdevin's dwelling was the theme of general surmise. All the little faction of disappointed suitors before mentioned were the busiest in the high wind of calumny and exaggeration, which now blew from all quarters, and in which the devil himself might have been proud to ride. The discharged hostler and the discarded tinman were the most dangerous slanderers of the fair fame of the respective objects of their former regard ; for, added to the sourness of feeling which had turned all the milkiness of their nature to curds, they carried the authority which vested in them as the nearest neighbors to the scene of action. The gossips were all abroad, and the open mouthed swallows of evil report had their appetites supplied to repletion.

As the whole town was in a tumult of agitation, it was impossible that the minions of authority could remain ignorant of what every

body knew, or pretended to know; and the consequence was a formal visitation to our inn by a whole posse, of public officers, registers, and other official busy-bodies, the morning after Captain Blouffe's adventure in the clock-case. The widow and her three lovers, with Marguerite and the two assistant neighbors, whose natural propensity for tittle-tattle had been the chief means of propagating the rumours of the day, were all examined, and their testimony taken down in due form; and the investigation, in short, carried to the utmost length to which it was possible to stretch the elastic vagueness of conjecture. Had the memorable siege of their town been about to be reacted, a more melancholy weight of frowns could not have pressed upon the brows of the functionaries, nor a more dignified distortion of muscle have screwed up each mouth in due pursuiness of place and power. A prodigious quantity of snuff was expended on the occasion, sufficient to have supplied the place of brains to half the official noodles of the land; and nods and winks were exchanged with a profuseness fitting such liberal proxies for the ideas they were intended to represent.

The depositions duly authenticated, and the magisterial mind made up, it was decided that Paul Ricochet was to have his fair chance of catching the ghost, and clearing up his character, which was perseveringly assailed by the innuendoes of Belpeche, all of which found a very ready recipient in the jaundiced and jealous mind of Blouffe, whence they issued again in doubled distilled asperity.

When "the authorities" in France lay their hand on (or put their foot in) any private speculation, be it of what nature it may, they are sure never to let go their hold while a remnant of the concern hangs together. It was not to be expected then that they would even for a moment resign the station they had once assumed in the domestic difficulties of the widow Potdevin; and she was therefore by no means surprised when she found that a couple of tall, booted, and belted Gendarmes were billeted upon her house, at her expense, the only part of the nuisance which prevented its being gratuitous on the part of "the authorities." These mixed epitomes of the civil and military power took possession of the warmest seats in the chimney corner, ordered the best breakfast and dinner, and adapted themselves to the most comfortable ways and usages of the house, with a phlegmatic condescension that abounds in the corps to which they belonged; but is not essentially national in France, for beyond the licensed inflictions of the armed police, one does not there meet with the cool and matter of course exactions which every Jack-in-office lays on elsewhere. The two Gendarmes had received public orders to afford every protection and assistance to the widow and her maid, which the nature of their cases might require, to aid Paul Ricochet in his efforts at discovering the author of the midnight proceedings; and there was, besides, a private article in their instructions, which commanded a strict *surveillance* over every person, and thing, and word, and action, and thought, that might by any possibility come under their cognizance.

The day wore over heavily enough to the inmates of the house, who felt ill at ease at the sight of the living badges of executive suspicion affixed to it. A number of idle gaping gossips were constantly dropping in and out, and every thing, in short, wore an air of considerable discomfort. The widow made it a point that Paul should remain constantly beside her; and Belpêche and Blouffe voluntarily established themselves of the household, and being rendered extremely valorous by the presence of the Gendarmes, they freely offered to sit up again that night, and give their powerful aid in sifting the secret doings towards the discovery of which they had already so much contributed. Paul could not refuse their offer to share his watch, without giving a color to the imputations they had set afloat against him; so it was decided that another well planned scheme for final discovery was to be that night carried into effect, should the creator of their disquietudes not have taken fright at the dreadful note of preparation so loudly and so publicly proclaimed.

In pursuance of the plan laid down, the women retired to their beds early—the lights were extinguished—and the five male guardians of the premises were closely and silently huddled together, on mattresses spread on the floor of the little back parlor, which was concealed from the view of the stairs, but so near as to allow of a ready seizure of any unwitting interloper who might venture into its perilous neighborhood. At eleven o'clock every man was lying in his place—Blouffe the farthest from the door—Ricochet next to it—and they one and all counted, with varying pulsation, the seconds as they steadily and solemnly struck upon the kitchen clock and the ear of night.

Time, like an experienced old hack, in his usual unaccommodating way, neither advanced nor retarded his rate of going one instant. Midnight came slowly and surely round, and the clock struck loud and strong, with the most impenetrable indifference to the nervous anxieties within its sound. Again its echoes expired—and again their faint tone was taken up by the low deep groan from the green-chamber. Again Paul Ricochet involuntarily closed his hand tight upon his sword, and again did Belpêche and Blouffe shake and quiver in the cold sweat of trepidation. The Gendarmes took the whole business very quietly, and held their carbines cocked and bayonets fixed ready for whatever result might happen.

A few repetitions of the groans were duly uttered—and then the cautious tread of the former night was heard, pat, pat, pat, along the corridor above. The footsteps gently approached the stairs, and presently the creaking of the old wood announced the descent of a foot upon the upper step. Another, and another, and another! And now Paul Ricochet rose slowly on one knee, with as much deliberation as though he feared the internal machinery of nerve and sinew might be heard on their muscular hinges. Advancing his sword arm cautiously out, he only waited the arrival of the mysterious visitant at the very foot of the stairs to spring upon it, be it man or demon; and in a minute more he would no doubt have effected that grand purpose; had not a violent increase of bodily agitation on the part of either Blouffe or Belpêche, or both, set into motion the whole parade

of glass and crockery on the table beside them. The rattling noise which this occasioned received a considerable addition from the reciprocally reproachful, "Hush!" and "Silence!" and "Be quiet!" and "Rest tranquil!" bandied backwards and forwards between the causes of the disturbance. Ricochet listened keenly—and watched for the descending foot, but in vain. A pause of a moment or two was succeeded by a rapidly retreating step up stairs; and when Paul rushed out from his concealment, with a lamp in one hand and his sword in the other, he only caught a glimpse of a tall figure in the act of gaining the very top of the flight. Up he sprang, and away it fled. The Gendarmes followed clattering after, and Blouffe, and Belpeche, afraid to be left alone, brought up the rear with all possible diligence.

The figure rushed quickly along the corridor, but Paul was gaining on it fast when it reached the door of the green-chamber. There it entered, and as Paul pursued, he heard the door bolted on the inside. He put his foot first and next his shoulder to this obstacle. It resisted the one effort, but gave way to the other, when Paul in the over violence of his exertions came sprawling into the middle of the room, his lamp tumbling out of his hand and instantly extinguished. At the same moment the opposite door was closed, and the key turned on the other side by the escaping figure. To force this was the work of some minutes, for it opened on the inside; but Paul, as soon as he got on his legs (the Gendarmes affording a light, procured from Madame Potdevin's lamp) worked hard with the tongs until he effected his object. The door once opened, up-stairs and down-stairs the searchers labored—but all in vain. Nothing was to be found.

Convinced that in the garrets above no living thing was lurking, and joined by the renovated reinforcement of Belpeche, Blouffe, and the women, who would none of them remain within, the party proceeded forthwith into the stable-yard, and there every nook was once more tried with the same result as before.

But the search was not now to be abandoned while one possible hiding place remained unpoked into. To the stable, therefore, they proceeded, and rack and manger, and even the bedding of the two old horses, thereon quietly reposing, were turned over and examined with a scrupulousness worthy of the military police. The lofts alone remained unexplored. Paul and the official examiners soon mounted there, and with great assiduity they all three commenced stabbing into the several heaps of hay and straw with which the place was filled. They each took a different compartment, but no groan nor other acknowledgment of injury replied to the scrutiny of their weapons. In utter despair of success, yet convinced that the object of their search lay somewhere cunningly concealed, they descended; and they were all proceeding with most discontented murmurings to the house, when Paul Ricochet suddenly stopped, and looked, with a mixture of surprise, satisfaction, and horror, at the bayonet of one of the Gendarmes, which glittered in the moon-light, as he paced onwards. Drops of blood were trickling from the blade.

Paul called the attention of his comrades to this enanguined proof that their scrutiny *had* reached some victim. The hearts of the dis-

appointed Gendarmes revived—Blouffe's did not revolt from the sight of blood—but those of Belpeche, the widow, and Marguerite sunk within them. Belpeche felt a sudden faintness once more steal over him, and he was obliged to lean against the pump for support, while Marguerite drew freely on its resources to reanimate his failing spirits. Blouffe and the widow stood by to help in his recovery, while the three more gallant spirits returned to the stable loft, and recommenced their search.

They carefully turned over the bundles of hay in the direction where the blood-stained bayonet had pierced before; and in a few minutes they did indeed discover the victim of its too successful search.

The unfortunate being now dragged forth unresistingly, presented a melancholy spectacle to the eyes of Paul, and even the hardened bosoms of the Gendarmes felt a throb of pity, when they beheld the object before them. It was the identical figure that had fled from Paul's pursuit—a man, tall, old, emaciated, whose strength must have been quite exhausted in his effort to escape, and the last drainings of whose heart's blood seemed oozing from the deadly wound gaping in his side. His head was bald, with the exception of some loose grey locks flowing at the back and sides; his beard was grizzly and matted, and concealed the natural expression of his gasping mouth. His other features were finely formed, the forehead high, broad and prominent, announcing both talent and energy of mind. His dark eyes were strained wide with agony, but still displayed a bright and bold expression. His nose was aquiline, and the forward chin was in unison with the determined cast which marked the whole physiognomy. His dress was ragged and filthy, denoting long neglect and confinement to the place where he was now discovered. A loose coat hung upon his meagre form, which had evidently pined away from its naturally full and powerful structure. His hands were well shaped, and bore evidence that they never had been used for ignoble purposes. The whole appearance indicated, in fact, a wreck of dignity and grace, manly beauty and commanding power.

While Ricochet and the Gendarmes, in their hurried and cursory observations, saw enough of all this to fill them with involuntary awe, the hapless object of their astonishment was bleeding rapidly to death.

Paul, whose ready head came always to the aid of a warm heart, proposed an immediate removal of the apparently expiring man to the shelter of the house. The Gendarmes were not so prompt in taking this view of the case, for they doubted whether it was in accordance with the criminal law to remove a culprit from the place where he met his death without proper authority, under the hand of the civil magistrate. To these objections, Paul briefly remarked, that, in the first place, the gentleman (he could not help according this title to him) was not dead; and next that, even if he were, no proof existed of his being a culprit; but that, on the contrary, they themselves might each just then be standing in that capacity, for having (even accidentally) inflicted a mortal wound upon a possibly innocent and unoffending citizen.

At this well put and forcible argument (which the men it was put to, instantly acknowledged and acted on,) the prisoner raised his

eyes, a faint smile played on his features, and he made an approving motion of the head. And that was the last proof he would consent, or condescend, to give of any understanding with those who came near him.

In a little while he was carried safely, though with great difficulty, down from the loft into the yard. The night air seemed for a moment to refresh him. At sight of his helpless form, all Captain Blouffe's small stock of courage revived, and his natural brutality burst forth. He was with difficulty prevented by Paul from plunging his cutlass into the dying man! Belpeche showed his manly weakness, by weeping hysterically over the sad object. The widow, Marguerite, and the female friends displayed all the sympathy with suffering so natural to the sex. They brought water and wine more quickly than the supporters of the body could reach the house, and they made kind but unavailing efforts to offer these simple and ready means of relief, which were obstinately rejected by the being before them, who seemed resolved to die.

The widow's heart, rather than her humanity, began to fail her as they entered the house.

"Must the poor creature be brought in here, Paul?" asked she, in a hesitating tone, as if half ashamed of the appearance of cruelty implied in the doubt.

"To be sure he must," quickly replied Paul, "what else could be done with him?"

"Curse the fellow," cried Blouffe, "let him lie and die in the cow-house, or the stable—too good a fate for such a scoundrel."

"Come, come, my brave captain," retorted Paul, "none of your ferocity now. I will protect this dying man while a gasp of life remains in him—and if you disturb his last moments by your brutality, you shall answer for it to me at the very point of that cutlass. In what room shall we place the gentleman?" continued Paul, in a decided tone.

"Where so properly," said Marguerite, "as in the green chamber?"

"Yes, where he committed" — Blouffe was adding in a somewhat subdued, but still brutal tone, when the stern countenance of the dying stranger caught his eye, and he turned away abashed, without power to finish his abusive sentence.

All seemed agreed in the correctness of Marguerite's suggestion, and the widow did not oppose an arrangement which confined the obnoxious necessity to a room already condemned to deadly suspicion, and so rendered, in fact, useless. To the green chamber, therefore, the party proceeded, and in the very bed where Potdevin had died was the bleeding stranger laid. He was watched closely by all around him, but no expression of remorse or uneasiness clouded his brow; and if a passing recollection of guilt had possession of his mind, his countenance at least did not betray it.

Paul Ricochet's first feeling, then was to run in search of a surgeon, and he promptly proceeded on the errand; while one of the Gendarmes, with practised precaution, hastened to examine the place where the stranger had been hidden, the other remaining to watch the safety of the body. Marguerite with infinite readiness staid close by

the bed side, forgetful of all former fears, applying such common and inefficient styptics as the house could afford.

Belpêche sat below at the kitchen fire with the widow, who had also the company of one of her female neighbors; the other, as they took the duty alternately, giving aid to Marguerite in her attendance above stairs. Blouffe perceiving how ill-received had been his cruel speeches about the wounded sufferer, sneaked off somewhat out of temper with himself, but still more so with all the rest of the world, like all men conscious of their own worthlessness; and he was soon stretched in his hammock in the cabin of his cutter, fancying that he despised every body out of it, because he knew himself to be deserving of their contempt.

Paul soon returned to the inn with a surgeon, who did not hesitate a moment to pronounce the stranger irrecoverably hurt, and fast approaching his end. At this professional confirmation of their own conjectures the gendarmes agreed that not a moment was to be lost in informing the authorities of what had passed, in order that official cognizance might be taken on the spot of all that might elucidate the mysterious transaction.

Drowsily alive to the summons which called them to the discharge of their awful duty, the authorities, or that part of them whose office it was on such occasions to represent the whole, were assembled after an hour or two, yawning and rubbing their eyes, to take in the evidence of the green-chamber. Several of these persons, with the callous abruptness of public officers in general, entered into a personal examination of the dying man; and true to the system of French law, they began a string of interrogatories, every one of which tended to lead to the self-crimination of the subject of their inquiries. Murder, robbery, and a long black catalogue of crimes might have been established against the accused, had not the clear lamp of intellect burned brightly to the last, and either instinct or information as to the nature of his examiners determined him to persevere in utter silence. The rack not being yet revived, they had no chance of forcing a reply; and therefore all their questions as to name, birth, location, occupation and the long train of usual etceteras, stood opposed in the official paper to so many blanks.

One of the functionaries, doubting the possibility of such obstinate contempt of himself and his august associates in any being not actually deprived of his mental faculties, suggested the likelihood of the stranger being a foreigner, and ignorant of the French language. This sagacious supposition met with considerable approbation; and as no one of the assembly was conversant with any other than his vernacular tongue, messengers were dispatched in several directions, with strict mandates to various residents or sojourners in the town, of different nations, to repair forthwith to the scene of this sad inquiry. In consequence of the summons several persons attended, and the most harassing and assiduous efforts were made, in four or five different languages, to draw some reply from the expiring man. He stared at each new catechist, and preserved a determined silence throughout.

All the efforts at discovering his nation, name, or quality, being

thus baffled, but one grand means remained to acquire that something in the way of information—that little peg, if I may use the homely phrase, on which official ingenuity might hang the robes of mock reality in which it too often disguises its most purely imaginary facts. That rarely-falling engine for extracting some acknowledgment, some doubt, or fear from the weakness of a death-bed was—religion. The priest was according summoned, and he duly came, preceded by the imposing mummeries which degrade the beautiful doctrine they are impiously attached to, and obscure the minds it was meant to enlighten.

I will not dwell on the solemn mockery of holiness displayed by the bed-side of the fast expiring stranger. The Cure, played his part—he exhorted, persuaded, threatened; called on the expiring sufferer to give one token of the faith—one acknowledgment, one hint of his belief. Heaven was held up for an instant in faint perspective—and hell, the more powerful stimulus to a mind of weakness, was beginning to glow fiercely in the lurid eloquence of the priest, when the wearied sufferer turned his head aside. He made no sign—but he was dead!

A burst of astonished consternation ran through the by-standers when the surgeon announced the fact. Compassion had now room to flow freely, from hearts which had been till then bound up in official insensibility, like animals that retain the vital spark, within the air excluding covering of wood or marble. Several could scarcely believe that the spirit was gone—for added to the innate incredulity with which men always witness the first touch of death, there was something so calm, so silent, so unstruggling in *this* instance of it, that it appeared impossible: and the little of mortal weakness or suffering evinced by the mysterious subject himself, gave rise to many a wild conjecture as to who and what he was. But of this hereafter.

Fast following the stream of pity came the freezing breath of selfishness, that unable but almost necessary instinct of imperfect man. All present soon turned their quick exchange of glances in upon themselves, and each asked how *he* might be affected by the event. The magistrates were one and all struck with the ear of blame and punishment, which they might well expect from the government for permitting, at such a period of political excitement, a stranger such as this to have been secreted in the town. The underlings present felt a deep sympathy in their employers' apprehensions, and much anticipation of regret for their possible removal from office—for they well knew their own would follow it. The doctor and the priest dreaded their share of reproach, the one for having suffered the dissolution of a body, and the other the escape of a soul. They were both aware that despotism is not over nice in its distinctions between right and wrong. And thus the electrical chain of self-interest was touched, and the shock vibrated at once through every bosom with its links kept together.

The natural result of this common feeling was simultaneous efforts to discover some clue to the mystery before them; and in the failure of success, to frame the best possible excuses for their want of infor-

mation. It will not be expected that I should enter into the minute description of the various kinds of dirty work employed on this occasion. Bribes and threats, spies and informers, and all the long train of device and subterfuge well known to the police, were put immediately into active service and remained long employed. But all to no purpose. Not a single trace of any kind could be discovered to lead to the knowledge of who this mysterious being was, where he came from, or why he was found in the place where he met his death. It appeared, that he must most industriously have destroyed any papers or other means of betrayal. Nothing came to light in his miserable retreat, but the close-gnawed remnant of bones and crusts of bread, giving the most degrading feeling of the fate of one undoubtedly suited to the nobler purposes of life. Several plausible conjectures were soon afloat—many monstrous suppositions got quickly abroad; but before I touch on either, I will close this long chapter, and allow the reader interested in its details to form his own opinions upon them.

CHAPTER VII.

Passing over many of those suppositions which the nature of the particular circumstances and the then situation of the country gave rise to, I will state but one, the most consistent with probability, and which obtained general credence among the best informed and most rational of the inhabitants of La Rochelle. It was, that the unknown was one of the several persons of distinction implicated in the plot which originated "The Infernal Machine;" and that on the failure of that diabolical conspiracy, he had fled from Paris, and secretly taken refuge with Potdevin, who, there was strong reason to suspect, had some connection with the political intrigues then going forward. The sudden death of the inn-keeper, which the most minute reconsideration of the circumstances, left no doubt of being produced by the natural cause originally assigned, had in all likelihood thrown the concealed stranger into the utmost want of the very means of subsistence; and it was probably while waiting the expected arrival of some accomplice in his and Potdevin's doings, that he was forced to have recourse to the stratagems already detailed, for terrifying the widow from opposing his midnight depredations. The ways of the house must have been familiar to him; and it will be recollected that some person was often overheard by Madame Potdevin in night conferences with her husband, immediately before the period of his death. Such was the least complicated and most rational reasoning on this strange subject; and to the conclusions it led I have no hesitation in subscribing my opinion.

But there were many who could by no means consent to receive as fact, such a very simple elucidation as this. The love of the marvellous still exists strong enough to make the vulgar prefer a mysterious supposition to a plain recital. To such it was in vain to apply the common arguments of reason. They were listened to with impatience by *the many* of the class immediately involved in Madame Potdevin's adventures, and even by *the few* with considerable reluctance—and they made no impression on the credulous mass that loved a tale of terror. By them, then, it was decided, irrevocably too, that poor Potdevin *was* murdered, that the stranger was his murderer; that the measure of his punishment was filled, not merely in his own violent death, but in the circumstance of his expiring in the very bed where he had strangled his unfortunate victim—and finally, that the inn would be haunted by his most uneasy ghost for ever and ever. But others went even farther than this, and pronounced it as their distinct belief that no being, merely mortal, could have succeeded so completely to have baffled the scrutiny of the police, which was in their notion *almost* omniscient. They therefore concluded, that some fiend in human form had been for a while let loose, and had commenced his sport in the purlieu of the inn, and they stoutly maintained that there was something in his bold death-daring demeanour which by no means guaranteed the town from his very speedy re-appearance. Had the taste for vampires, in all their horrors been at that period revived the good people of La Rochelle would no doubt have placed the mysterious stranger among that amiable and blood sucking race.

Altogether, a bad name was firmly fixed upon the inn, and that even before the unfortunate stranger was removed from it to the grave, where the worms below were not more busy at his body, than the reptiles above at his reputation. As soon as he was buried, and that an utter hopelessness was established of gaining any posthumous proof of his identity, a regular *proces verbal* was dressed (*dresse*) in the most becoming suit of masquerade costume, and transmitted to the Grand Depot of manufactured humbugs at the *Police generale* of Paris. Glad of giving proofs of the authenticity of my recitals, where records exist, and are within my reach, I will subjoin here a copy, and a translation of the official documents relating to this subject, I procured them with some difficulty through the intervention of a friend; and they may perhaps possess some little interest, as a model of the way "they do these things in France," independently of any which attaches to them from their local connection with the transaction I have related.

As I could not, consistently, with proper respect to the majesty of these state papers, intrude a less dignified subject into the same chapter with them, I will return, in another, to the topic of the widow Potdevin's amorous designs, and show as a moral how true lovers were, as they ought always to be, made happy.*

*I very much regret: being, after all, unable to redeem the foregoing pledge; and am forced to let that inability belie the assertion which stands above recorded, that I had *procured* the documents in question. The fact was, I had only obtained the *promise* of them; but that so positive on the part of

CHAPTER VIII.

From the memorable night on which the stranger died, Paul Ricochet, at the positive request of Madame Potdevin, regularly took up his residence, bed and board, at the inn. This became now a point of actual necessity from the tranquility of the widow's mind, and of Marguerite's also, for though all apprehension of downright danger was removed, still the terror excited by the eventful and mysterious occurrence preyed with real severity upon them. A thousand advantages might have been taken of the dubious character now attached by common consent to the house (and which the malignant, the envious, and the idle, are always prone to seize on) had not the sturdy protection of such a man as Paul been at hand. But, with him, as the avowed champion of the widow's reputation, and the received candidate for a still more legitimate responsibility, the tongues of the most talkative gradually became dumb, and the old frequenters of the house came back by degrees to give it their countenance again. The kitchen soon resumed its wonted appearance of carousing and jollity, the widow recovered her good looks and Marguerite's smile were even more than its usual vivacity.

Paul Ricochet had been the actual and undoubted means of developing the secret, on the discovery of which depended the widow's generous reward of ten thousand francs, a sum that would have been extravagant had it not been for the additional clause which proved that she meant herself to accompany the gift. The widow never for one moment doubted that if the secret were to be discovered at all, Paul Ricochet was the man to discover it. She knew that the amiable weakness of Belpeche, and the swaggering poltroonery of Blouffe, were quite incompetent to the performance of any such feat, and it was even whispered that at the time she held out the liberal inducement to exertion, she had been in some measure infected with the suspicions of Paul's rivals, and that she was more pleased than

my friend, that we were both quite certain of its performance. But if the reader knew the difficulty of extracting any thing of this kind from the provincial archives of France, he would, I am sure, grant a full pardon for my failure. It is scarcely to be believed what trouble was taken in the present instance, to get a copy of the papers relative to "le revenant de la Rochelle," as my mysterious stranger is still called in the scene of his fatal adventure. Heaps of official rubbish have been destroyed since the epoch of my story; quantities had been transferred to Paris, and still more to Saintes, another departmental depot for such records. Enough, however, remained to give my friend incalculable trouble; but all his researches have ended in disappointment; and we cannot resist the suspicion that some important secret did really lurk in the pages of *Procès Verbal*, which was the cause of its being withheld, if not altogether suppressed. But it is perhaps of no consequence. The production of those guarantees for the authenticity of my story would have been certainly material, for my own satisfaction; but my readers will probably, even without such testimony, give the same degree of credit to the accuracy of the facts here recorded, as my other recitals have already succeeded in obtaining.

angry at the notion of *his* having played off the trick from his over ardor to secure what she felt convinced was the great object of his hopes, herself. She therefore, the very day after the tragical event which entitled him to his well-earned recompense, made known to him her intention immediately to ratify the engagement she had signed at his suggestion; and then, being amply convinced that Paul was perfectly innocent of all complicity in the mid-night alarms, she persuaded herself, with the ease of a fond woman, that she should have never forgiven such an outrage on his part against all delicacy and affection towards her. Either way, therefore, Paul Ricochet stood secure of the widow's regard, and he could not help seeing quite plainly that he had only to ask the "any other request," coupled with the promised pecuniary reward, to obtain the utmost extent of what it was meant to imply.

Under these circumstances it might have been supposed that Paul would at once have come forward with his demand for the widow's hand, and it was fully looked for by the gossiping neighbors all round that the marriage would be rushed into without any regard for appearances, or decent respect to the memory of poor Potdevin, whom the same sapient speculators without hesitation supposed to be utterly forgotten by wife and friend. But it was not exactly so, or at least sufficient of their respective relations to the deceased innkeeper were remembered to tell them what was due to a decent regard to their own reputations and interests. Paul declared every where that he had not the least notion of marrying the widow, and the widow, half whispering, half tittering, talked much of the merits of her defunct spouse, and endeavoured to speak lightly and slightly of Paul. But there was an invariable weight in her words, or their pronunciation, which kept her tongue dwelling on the latter theme, unlike the glib and rapid passages of speech which cursorily touch upon some object of real indifference. The widow, in fact, could no more give weight to her affected grief than lightness to her deep felt hopes; but still she saw the absolute necessity of showing a fair attention to the observances of the world, and resolved to let a tolerably decent length of time pass over before she even acknowledged her intention of marrying again.

Paul never showed the least desire to push the affair farther than seemed consistent with Madame Potdevin's inclinations, and she amply felt the force of this apparent delicacy towards her. He received in virtue of her engagement, the regular transfer of ten thousand francs in the French funds, a large sum for him to become the possessor of, but small in comparison with the widow's wealth; and those who knew Paul Ricochet's cautious and calculating character, were little surprised at his using no abruptness towards her, which might altogether mar his almost present certainty of more than ten times the sum he had received. It certainly was not probable that the widow would have been much alarmed or at all displeased at a bold outbursting of Paul's yet unuttered passion; but still it was argued, he was not a fellow to trust to probabilities, when it seemed sure that by letting the widow's attachment take its own course, she would herself bring the point to a conclusion, and thus allow him to

make whatever terms he chose. But besides the widow's prudential and wordly reasons for not indecently hurrying on a second union, so fresh upon the shocking suddenness of her former husband's death, there was an obstacle just then in force, in the interval of six weeks before Christmas during which the Roman Catholic Church prohibits its members from contracting marriages. It is to be hoped the priests keep a sharp look out after the morality of their parishioners during the thousands of melting *tete-a-tetes* which take place on the chilly evenings of that season.

During all this period the widow took unceasing pains to prove to Marguerite, to whom she gave her whole confidence, that her interests should not suffer from the change which she premeditated in her own situation. She assured her faithful bar-maid that she, would stipulate with her new husband, be he whom he might, that an ample settlement should be made on her, to ensure her a respectable match and a sufficient independence for a person in her station, upon the foundation of which she and the man of her choice might follow the prudent example of poor Potdevin and herself, and realize a good fortune. Marguerite, who had been always remarkable for her generous easy temper, seemed little affected by the projected change in the widow's situation. She never repined at what must certainly ensure a very great diminution in the portion on which she had every right to reckon during Potdevin's lifetime. She took the widow's assurances in a light and disinterested way, and she did not even utter one murmur at the profuseness of the reward given to Paul Ricochet, although it made a very sensible deduction from what was now likely to come to her own share.

But with all this contented submission to whatever might happen as to her fate and fortune, Marguerite had a sound understanding, and she knew enough of the world to know the serious value of looking fairly and prudently to one's own interests, without a just attention to which, it is almost impossible ever to be able to forward those of another. She had, besides, some staunch and steady friends, and one attached and faithful adviser, in whom she reposed the most implicit confidence. Acting, therefore, upon the prudential reasonings of those who knew human nature better than she did, and who thought that no dependance was to be placed on promises that were liable to the shifting of every caprice, she in a calm and guarded, and not offensive manner, began a series of quiet inducements to persuade her mistress to fix beyond all doubt of change the provision that she so kindly and generously intended to make for her. As this was done in a way not to startle that tendency towards avaricious considerations, which I fear is too often found lurking about the middle path of life, the widow took it all in good part; and being as I before intimated, not only a friendly and generous, but a shrewd and sensible person, she soon saw that she might at once, perhaps, get Marguerite more cheaply off her hands than, by letting her linger long, allow her expectations to accumulate at compound interest. She therefore resolved at once to settle a certain sum upon Marguerite, and the only thing that puzzled her, was the amount of the sum to be settled. She wished to steer clear of stinginess, and was resolved to do nothing extravagant:—in fact, she did grudge every louis put out of her power

of bestowing upon Paul, and her regard for whom had added a ten-fold value to her possessions.

In this dilemma, and swayed backwards and forwards by a great number of contending calculations and considerations, she resolved upon consulting Paul Ricochet himself. She thought there could be no doubt but such a communication would lead to his actual confession of her views upon himself, and that she might, by showing him how completely his own interest was involved, gain a decided sanction to the rather niggardly amount at which she had almost fixed Marguerite's intended portion. In consequence of this, one frosty day, when Marguerite had just left the house on an errand to some distance, looking as rosy and crisp as if she did not give a thought to her pecuniary concerns, the widow pulled her rush bottomed arm-chair closer to the fire in the little parlor, and told Paul to draw nearer the three legged stool on which he sat smoking a cigar; and she began something as nearly as possible to the following conversation, darning a tablecloth, while Paul continued smoking all the while.

Widow. Well, Paul—it's a cold day.

Paul. Yes, Madame.—(puff!)

Widow. And, Paul—are you warm?

Paul. Not very, Madame.

Widow. Paul—come a little closer to the fire, can't you?

Paul. Yes, Madame.—(puff!)

Widow. Now, Paul, you know what an opinion I have of you—that is, Paul, of your good sense and prudence, and—

Paul. Yes, Madame.

Widow. Well, then, Paul, I have to consult you on a very serious affair—and, Paul, I want your honest and candid opinion—and I know you won't deceive me? Will you Paul?

Paul. No, Madame.—(puff, puff!)

Widow. You know Marguerite, Paul?

Paul. Yes, Madame.—(puff, puff, puff!)

Widow. Very well, Paul; it is my intention to settle something independent upon her—don't you think me right, Paul?

Paul. Yes, Madame.—(puff, puff!)

Widow. But, do you know, I am very much puzzled?

Paul. No, Madame.

Widow. Well, but I tell you I *am*. Do you know what it is about Paul?

Paul. No, Madame.—(puff!)

Widow. How dull you are to-day, Paul!

Paul. Yes, Madame.—(puff, puff!)

Widow. Then it is, Paul, to know—how much I should settle on Marguerite.

Paul. (Puff, puff, puff!)

Widow. Paul!

Paul. Madame.

Widow. Did you hear what I said?

Paul. Yes, Madame!

Widow. Do you not understand me?

Paul. No, Madame.—(puff!)

Widow. Well, then, since you will, Paul, force me to speak plainly—I want your opinion—as to the amount I ought to settle on this girl. Stop, don't answer me in a hurry—consider a moment, Paul—consider just a moment, how much my interest is concerned—how much of those another person—those of yourself, Paul, are at stake—consider—

Paul. (Taking his cigar from his mouth, and dashing it into the fire.) Now I tell you what, Madame Potdevin, you know I am a man of few words; but when I speak, I like to speak to the purpose. I know my interest is concerned—it would be deceiving you and myself if I affected not to think so. Therefore, I have no opinion on the subject—and what's more, I would not give it even if I had one.

Widow. (Not at all comprehending *this* kind of delicacy.) Why now really, Paul, this is very odd of you—it is indeed, Paul. But, Paul, have you no opinion on a point that is after all—as much perhaps your affair as it is mine? What would people say to this?

Paul. Mark me, Madame Potdevin, no one shall have a word to say against me in this matter, let what will happen. Your money is your own—do with it as you like! (Here Paul rose up and prepared to quit the room.)

Widow. One word, Paul—but one word—Do you think ten thousand francs enough?

Paul. (As he strode out into the kitchen.) Ten thousand francs! Since you ask me the question plainly, I plumply answer, no. Considering that Marguerite has helped to make all your fortune—considering that had Potdevin lived or made a will she would have had at least half of it—I do think that ten thousand francs would be a shabby portion. That, once for all, is my opinion Madame—and more I will never say. You may give the girl what you like—more or less—no matter how my own interest gains or suffers—no reproach shall rest on me any where. Good morning, Madame Potdevin.

And thus ended the colloquy.

Now, the abrupt and bullying tone assumed by Paul on this occasion might possibly have produced a very bad effect to his disfavor, had it not been addressed to a woman, body and soul, flesh and blood, skin and bone, in love. But with females in that disastrous predicament, particularly if they enjoy that "second spring," which one of our poets somewhere talks of, perhaps this very tone is the one most likely to be best received. It is very certain that women so circumstanced will bear willingly an air of authority from the man they love, though they do not, it may be, go the lengths ascribed to them by the proverbial saying, which compares them to spaniels, but which no author, that I recollect, has ventured to exemplify in action but Moliere in his character of Pourceynage's wife.

There is no knowing what Madame Potdevin would not have borne, had Paul been her husband on that day, and her lovesick fit been still alive. As things were, the sharp lecture she received produced a very striking and powerful effect. That very day she repaired to the honest notary (for there was one such in the town) who had drawn up all her deceased husband's and her own papers, and, while the warm beam of generosity was upon her, she settled upon Marguerite beyond the power of revocation, the sum of twenty thousand francs,

by the same process which she had before adopted in her recompense to Paul, a transfer of so much stock in the public funds.

That evening she assembled Paul, Marguerite, Belpeche, the notary, and a few other friends, in the memorable little parlor, and she there, in a very off-hand and liberal manner, informed the circle of what she had done, and deposited the paper which secured the money in Marguerite's own hands.

At this strong proof of regard and generosity, and actuated by feelings known best to herself, Marguerite burst into tears, and sobbed forth the warmest expressions of gratitude. She now found herself, indeed, more independent than ever she could have hoped for, though certainly not as rich as she might formerly have calculated on some time or other becoming. She had now the control of a large sum of money, while youth and spirits were revelling within her—how much better than the expectancy of five times as much at her mistress's death, when the sap of her own life would be wasted away in the anxious watchings for the treasure, dearly bought by years of slavery and doubt! She held the paper unconsciously in her hand, until the fast falling tears, had almost washed out the widow's signature, when the sharp-eyed notary removed it from its critical position.

During the progress of this scene, Paul Ricochet did not speak a word. When Madame Potdevin announced the amount of the settlement made on Marguerite, he started half up from his chair—a very rare instance of being thrown off his guard—but immediately recovering himself, he looked thoughtful and dull for the rest of the evening—and the witnesses, one and all, remarked to each other on their way home that it was a pity such an ungenerous narrow minded fellow should ever have the control of the liberal widow's person and possessions.

The widow herself was painfully struck with Paul's apparent disapproval of what she had done in pursuance of his opinion, if not actually his suggestion. She thought she could perceive that he retracted his liberal view of the case. She lamented her indiscreet profusion a moment, but she was certain in the next that it must have pleasingly proved to him his influence over her; and she thought the best way to reconcile him to its irrevocable consequence was to boldly lead to the important subject, which she felt to be the uppermost in his breast as in her own. She therefore briefly and blushing-ly addressed the assembled party, to the effect, that having now in two instances relieved her mind from a weight of obligation, and given independence and respectability to Marguerite, she had to touch upon a matter which involved much of her own happiness, and might affect *perhaps* that of another. The love-sick emphasis of that "*perhaps*" was fairly levelled at Paul. She could not speak much plainer, but she closed her address by saying, that, as many obstacles would be soon removed to the granting of any request which Paul might, in reason, make, and which she felt herself in honour bound to grant according to her pledge, she would fix her own fête day, the third of the next month, January, when she would, in presence of the chosen party then assembled, and amidst the annual congratulations and blessing of her friends,

and under the auspices of St. Geneviève, her patron and namesake, be prepared to receive Paul's request ; and she hoped to grant it with the same cordiality and pleasure in which she had no doubt it would be asked.

The widow breathed more freely when her speech was finished, and, for the first time in her life, she felt relieved when Paul took his candle and walked up stairs to bed. She willingly found excuses for his embarrassment of air, in the rush of anticipated happiness in which she felt it but natural for him to indulge. She embraced Marguerite more affectionately than ever, as they mutually took possession of their beds, still in the same chamber ; and Marguerite's convulsing sobbings of gratitude were rather a lullaby than an interruption to the placid repose of Madame Potdevin, on this the happiest night she had spent for many a year.

CHAPTER IX.

During the two or three weeks following the night last alluded to, the parties concerned in the momentous question about to be asked, and calculated upon as certain to be acceded to, mingled with their several occupations serious thoughts respecting the approaching fête of Saint Geneviève. Madame Potdevin indeed did many things about her house ; but she thought of but one, and the associate points diverging from it. The manner in which Paul would pop the question—what she should say in reply—how she should look—when she should fix the marriage, and many such other self-put and self-answered queries arose upon her in quick mind and vapoury succession. Every matter of mere business sounded buzzingly in her brain ; and had not Marguerite had a little more command of herself, the affairs of the inn would have gone into a woeful confusion.

But Marguerite, too, had reason to look to the coming day with anxiety, if it were merely as it might affect her own future situation ; for it was very questionable indeed if the arrangements it was to produce might not wholly change her situation in life, and probably banish her from her early home for ever.

Paul Ricochet felt, and justly too, that the most serious moment of his life was at hand—that important one in which he was not only to choose his own destiny but that of another, loading himself with a double weight of responsibility, for his own happiness and her's. He pondered well upon that coming day, and the course he was to pursue ; for he knew that his reputation for good sense, good feeling, fair play, and manliness was at stake. To give him time to cogitate more at his ease, and uninterrupted by the bustling realities of life, he took once more to his fishing boat, which he had for some time neglected. He had her cleaned up afresh, new caulked, new painted, and re-rigged. He had

his nets all mended, and his lines all leaded, hooked, and baited. He assorted his crew from among his old comrades ; and, with his complement of nine men and two boys, he once more prepared to put to sea, leaning against the rudder of his floating home, as proud, as independent, and as despotic on her little deck as any admiral in the fleet.

The herring fishery was now in its full season, and the annual ceremony of "blessing the sea" was about to be enacted. A long procession of priests, with their attendants, tapers, incense boxes, and all the paraphernalia of their mystery, marched regularly from the town to the sea-side ; and there, gazed at by all the idle and gaping part of the population, but sympathized with, only by a few of the fishermen and those connected with them, the waves received the benediction which was supposed to penetrate into their deep recesses, and to act as a charm on the shoals of piscatory wanderers that floated through their pathless ways. Among all the followers of the reverend magicians, no one uttered more fervent responses to their invocations for large draughts and fine weather than the widow Potdevin ; and Marguerite echoed her mistress's prayers with a due and becoming sincerity of tone and mien.

Paul Ricochet all the while, with his arms folded and a cigar in his mouth, lounged carelessly against the rudder, which he anxiously longed to direct once more ; and when the procession returned towards the town, while the chanting priests were still within hearing, he gave the order for hoisting sail, and away his little vessel scudded with a light and favouring breeze. His was the first to sail. Twenty others soon followed its track, and the little fleet moved gallantly away, tacking and manœuvring to clear the harbour and avoid running foul of each other with great skill and much picturesqueness. As the leading boat passed the pier and bounded over the breakers which dashed upon the bar, the master at the helm, Paul Ricochet, took off his red woollen cap for the last time of saluting, and waved it courteously (with the respectful air of the poorest Frenchman's salutation to the lowliest female of the land) towards the spot where Madame Potdevin and Marguerite stood. The widow was almost overcome, and leaned more heavily upon her handmaid's arm, and they waved their pocket handkerchiefs in signal of their good wishes, until Paul and his little boat were no longer to be distinguished from the others, as they were half hidden or imperfectly revealed by the heaving of the billows.

For four and twenty hours Ricochet and his fellow fishermen remained as usual out at sea, and with the flowing of the tide the following day the little fleet of boats came into the bay again, one by one, without any precedence from any title but good sailing, or any salute but that of the expectant fish-women who hailed them from the pier. Among the scattered groups of the pickled and preserved retailers, who stood up or sat upon their empty baskets watching the boats as they approached, was to be discovered the figure of Madame Potdevin, throwing out the bait of her anxious looks with which she hoped to entice Paul Ricochet into the tangly meshes of the matrimonial net. His boat at length appeared working its way merrily into the harbor, its little streamer of blue serge floating at the mast head ; and ropes, and sails, and sides all shining brilliantly in the frosty sunbeams—being, like all the others,

thick covered with the scales of the hundreds of scores of herrings with which it was filled. Ricochet stood as usual at the helm, and he and his crew one and all wore upon their cheeks the healthy bloom painted by the rough wings of the ocean breeze. A well pleased look beamed on every countenance, the signal of a successful haul; but the moment Paul's eyes fell upon the widow an air of involuntary confusion overspread his face. This her quick glance perceived, and her heart interpreted it with no unpleasing solution. The men forming his crew observed it as well, and wondered what the deuce could revive the abstracted look with which he had during the live-long day gazed down into the sea, fathoming, with his glances, regions too deep for fish.

For the remaining days of the month of December Paul took but few holidays, but made the most of the fine clear frosty weather, catching large cargoes of fish, and pondering on the deep subject which evidently worked upon his mind; and on the evenings when he happened not to be out at sea, his manner was in spite of all his efforts, constrained and stiff, a change which occasioned much astonishment to the widow, whose supple feelings found no sympathy in his.

I have stated that Belpêche was a cautious, calculating, crafty old fellow; and all his actions proved that he possessed that left-handed cleverness, which enabled him to see and turn to advantage most of the weak points of another. He had treasured up some plain proverbial axioms, which he formed into a code for the regulation of his conduct, and a standard by which to calculate the probable conduct of others. Without enumerating these, it is enough to state that they consisted chiefly of such prudential sayings, as "patience and perseverance;" "'Tis a long lane that has no turning;" "Many a slip 'twixt cup and lip;"—and, with some one or other of these ever in his thoughts, though they seldom escaped his tongue, he never abandoned any pursuit, merely because appearances were against success. On this principle he had acted through life. He had chosen for his garden-ground a piece of land the most apparently unfavorable, but by unwearied care he overcame every impediment to making it the best in the town, or around it. He tried a hundred odd and harsh experiments in planting, grafting, and pruning, but by dint of watching and waiting, he was sure to catch a favorable season or good symptom, and almost always succeeded. He thus, like a rattle-snake fascinating a bird, fixed his eye upon his object and kept his maw open; and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the victim fell in.

A man of less pertinacity or more sentiment, would have been sure to hide his head in a bed of his own cabbages, sooner than show his face again at the inn, after the signal proofs of cowardice he had there displayed. But Belpêche made light of the disgrace, and, with a species of courage peculiar to some men, he braved the whole torrent of reproach and ridicule which was poured against him; and by the callousness of his demeanour under this kind of danger, he actually brought many people to think he had been calumniated with respect to that other sort, which to most men is infinitely less to be dreaded. Regularly, then, did the old gardener come, more sprucely

dressed than ever, more profusely furnished with bunches of geranium, myrtle, and other evergreens, emblematic of his passion, to pay his daily court and courtly compliments to the widow Potdevin. He gave to all these assiduities the appearance of unshaken devotion to her, although he acknowledged himself to have forfeited all chance for her favor; but it was all, in fact, the consequence of pure regard for himself. For he saw, or thought he saw, something mysterious in the bearing of Paul Ricochet. He did not exactly know what was in the wind—but he was determined that it should not be for want of a sharp look out, that it was not to blow good to him. Madame Potdevin received his continued attentions with great indifference; but valuing his respectable character and steady advice, she was glad to have him for a friend and witness to her late important transaction, and to that most important of all with which she was about to usher in the new year.

And at length, the new year came fairly in, amidst a profusion of sweetmeats, and cakes, and comfits—solid edibles and empty compliments. It slipped so quietly into the footsteps of the year that was just gone, that, by those who had no strong motive to mark the time, the entrance and the exit might have been alike unnoticed. But to the objects of our present observation it was not so; and the first of January was marked with peculiar solicitude, chiefly because the third came so close upon it. And with the dawn of that self-same third of January, 1806, there was not one of the numerous name-sakes and votaries of Saint Genevieve, who opened her orisons with a greater flutter of spirit than Madame Potdevin, or continued them with more ardor, or finished them with higher hope. She was really fond of Paul Ricochet, and she longed for the coming hour, when she intended plainly to say so to him and the whole world without reserve.

And sure enough that hour arrived—but not alas! to answer the expectations of Madame Potdevin. Once more the little parlor assumed the important air of council-chamber consequence. The chosen friends were there—the new year's presents—the fete-day offerings—flowers from Belpeche, and fish from Paul, and sundry varieties of other gifts from all the widow's neighbors around. Amidst such a profusion of blooming things who could have thought that disappointment would have lurked, like a canker within the blossoms!

As the friends came in, one by one, or in pairs, or groups, the ready and ruddy cheeks of the widow presented themselves to the embraces of the visitors, gaining new bloom from the contact, instead of giving it, as the cheeks of other widows might do. Belpeche was one of the first at the levee, carrying a bouquet too large for any flower-pot to contain; and it was accordingly placed in a tub upon the round marble table, which, according to custom, graced the middle of the little parlor. The mantle-piece groaned with the inferior offerings of boxes of *bon-bons*, and little nick-nacks of foil and glaze and looking glass combined, of the price of five francs down to one.

The widow's eyes glanced pleasedly upon these trifles, for the

habit of receiving such tokens of kind feeling from one's neighbors, raises them much above their intrinsic value. But an object of a different nature was in the widow's thoughts, and she never considered the presents of her fete day friends so little worth.

At length Paul Ricochet came in. He was determined to be the last, that he might have a full room to keep him in countenance—not venturing to confront the single tenderness of the widow. He had dressed himself in his very best for the occasion. His fur cap and blue woollen jacket, with its brass buttons, the red scarf of netted worsted twined round his neck, the green plush waistcoat, blue cloth trousers, and huge brown boots, wrinkled half way up his thighs, were all spick and span new, as well as the pair of fox-skin gloves, which completed his costume from head to hand and foot. As he entered the room he doffed his cap, and bowing respectfully to the whole company, and particularly to the widow, he pulled off the hairy covering from his right hand, and held it out to Marguerite. She placed her's in it cordially, and from the rush of crimson to her cheeks, it was surmised that Paul gave her fingers about such a squeeze as he might have given to a halcyon or cable.

Every eye was turned upon Paul, and every ear straining to catch the sounds of his expected speech. He did not keep the company long in suspense; for standing bolt upright, and clapping the cap once more upon the side of his head, and holding Marguerite's hand steadily in his, he began as follows:—

"Madame Potdevin, I owe you a great many obligations, and I am very grateful to you for them, and particularly for your generous bounty lately; and, so far all is right! And now, Madame, I have a request to ask—and you promised to grant it—and I am sure you will—and, so far, all is right! Now, Madame—hold up your head, Marguerite! Now, Madame, need I ask the favor? Does not the whole thing speak for itself? I hope you can't break faith and retract your promise, but that you will consent to my marrying Marguerite."

"Marry Marguerite!" exclaimed every one, the widow scarcely able to articulate the wonder-speaking exclamation.

"Aye, to be sure, and why not? Haven't we loved each other many a year, and without a soul knowing it but ourselves, secretly and faithfully? And so far all was right—wasn't it? Come, Madame Potdevin, you have made me independent of you."

"Indeed, indeed I have," sobbed the widow.

"And this is the way you repay her generosity!" cried the women.

"Let him go on"—whispered Belpeche.

"You have made me independent," continued Paul, letting go Marguerite's hand; and taking a greasy leather case from the inside pocket of his jacket, and untying the string that bound it, he drew forth a paper, and held it up to view. "Here is the document," continued he, "which gives me the ten thousand francs of your money. It is a large sum, a fortune for me; but not for ten times the amount—that is about your whole fortune perhaps—would I keep it, and let you Madame, or any one living, say I took advantage of your generosity to use you ill."

With these words, he tore the assignment into scraps, and strewed them on the floor.

"What are you doing, man?" exclaimed the astonished notary, gathering the pieces together.

"Oh, Paul, Paul," cried the widow, "I cannot speak to you! How cruel and honorable both together!"

"No, Madame, not a bit cruel. Had I indeed abandoned this good girl, and sold myself for your money, I should have been cruel and dishonorable too—but I could do neither."

"Oh!" cried the widow, hysterically, "am I come to this? Oh, Marguerite, you treacherous thing! to get my property from me, and steal him whom I valued more than all!"

"Ah, Madame," sobbed Marguerite, "I can excuse all you say—but I don't deserve it, I did *not* steal him from you, for he was mine, by promise and vow, in truth and honor, many a day before you had any right to think of him; and as for the money you have settled on me, it is true, I did follow the advice of my friends, and of Paul above all the rest, to get you to make me independent; but when we saw what your generosity did for me, giving me twice as much as you had intended, and twenty thousand times more than you need have done, we could make but one resolution, and this it is"—and here she pulled out her assignment of the twenty thousand francs from her bosom, and following Paul's example she tore it into pieces.

"Oh, don't tear it, don't tear it," exclaimed the widow, "I'd rather you'd keep the money, and let me hate you!" and a violent flood of tears came to her relief.

"No, no, Madame Potdevin, you must not hate me," sobbed Marguerite, taking her mistress's hand; "you have all along loved me, and from childhood up, I have known no mother but you, and I have loved you and do love you like a child. Oh, do forgive me, Madame; I would have given Paul up entirely, when I found you liked him, but I could not—indeed, Madame, I could not; I struggled hard with myself, but he had a way with him that quite overcame all my resolutions."

"I know he had, the horrid wretch!" said the widow, convulsively.

"Come, come, Madame," whimpered Paul, taking the other hand, "do forgive me—it was not my fault—nature made me so."

"Don't touch me with your nasty hand, you—you—Oh Paul, Paul, Paul!" once more cried the poor widow, and her head involuntarily leaned against his shoulder, while she still held his and Marguerite's hands in hers. "Oh what shall I do or say?" continued she, unheeding, and scarcely expecting an answer. But there was a prompt one quite ready.

"Forgive them, and tell them you do," silyly whispered Belpêche

"Ah, Monsieur Belpêche, are you there?" said the widow, raising her eyes languidly, and throwing their misty beams upon the insinuating old gardener.

"To be sure I am," replied he softly, "where would I be when he widow Potdevin was unhappy or uncomfortable?"

Shall I press the continuance of this scene upon my readers? or

insult their ready tact at winding up a story, by telling them the result? or weary them by spinning out details of what they know, by this time at least, was sure to happen? I will do no such thing, but let them one and all find out of themselves how the widow recovered her temper and her spirits—how she forgave the delinquents whom she could not punish—how she was touched by the honesty and independent spirit of both in returning to her what she had given away—how she could not bear the thoughts of entirely losing Marguerite, and giving up Paul—how she consented to their marriage, shared her fortune with them, and made it a condition that they should ever live together—how she prudently thought that, to avoid scandal and secure impunity, she could not do better than marry old Belpêche—how she married him accordingly—and how the whole party lived as happily and comfortably as best they might for the fifteen long years preceding my first visit to the inn, where I found them and left them just in the state described in the opening pages of this tale. All this I leave my readers to settle their own fancy, giving my sanction to the arrangement of the whole.

I hope, however, in my anxiety to be brief at this conclusion of my story, I have not omitted any of those little cementing points necessary to connect the whole. If I have, I throw myself on the indulgence of my readers, and beg that they, for whom I have avowedly left so much to fill up, will also supply such possible deficiencies. So that thus every reader providing for an omission as he thinks it ought to have been done by the author, the latter runs a better chance of giving general satisfaction.

I have very little indeed to communicate as to the doings of the "joint stock" proprietors of the inn. If any little bubbles (the natural associates connected with such companies) arose from time to time on the surface of the domestic waters, their bursting only left the stream to flow on untroubled again. Nothing, in fact, I believe, could have been more generally prosperous and quiet than the lives and adventure of our doubly married household. Belpêche attended to his garden, took his nap by the fire-side o' nights, and thus got a convenient habit of shutting his eyes on whatever he did not choose to see. Paul Richochet gave up the fishing trade and took to inn-keeping, which he managed cleverly but rather clumsily. The widow and Marguerite, as joint mistresses, had no rivalries to disturb them. Paul performed to a marvel the duties of a good husband, and he made up in kind offices to Madame Potdevin, as well as he was able, for the disappointment she had the first instance experienced. Her natural good sense soon reconciled her to the only state of things which was attainable, and she assented to Paul's favorite maxim that "so far all was right."

I have not thought it worthy my while, and I am sure it is not worth my readers', to throw away a thought upon Captain Blouffe—I never inquired what became of him.

Perfect happiness, or freedom from its reverse, is not to be found in this world; therefore it is not astonishing that one subject of a painful nature was constantly mixed with the enjoyments of the inn and its inmates. This was the unfortunate imputation fixed indel-

ibly upon the house, of its being haunted. Nothing could ever remove the impression that such was the case from the public mind, and indeed even the private circle of its inhabitants was one and all infected with the same suspicion, if not the actual belief. A thousand odd stories and remarkable coincidences had accumulated in the space of fifteen years, all tending to give great weight to the popular, and, as I have just said, to the private notion. It is needless to dwell on those. To many, such circumstantial evidence would prove nothing; to others, what I saw myself may be sufficient proof. The prevalent notion was, that the frequent visitings of the first years following the mysterious stranger's appearance and most awful death, had gradually subsided into those which are said to be peculiar to angels, few and far between. In fact, an annual return was all that was believed in when I first saw the inn, and that was always supposed to take place on the anniversary of some one of the three nights on which Belpêche, Blouffe, and Ricochet took their memorable turns of watch. Except those night's, travellers and townsmen freely slept at the inn, and feared nothing; but on *these* no one within the echo of the rumors of La Rochelle would, for any consideration, venture to encounter the risks which I unwittingly ran, and at any rate escaped from.

Whether the stranger's spirit did or does haunt the house, it is not for me to say. Report maintains strictly that the green chamber is and ever will be subject to its appearance, and that the habit of the being, during life, of hunting in the presses and cupboards, is still the distinctive proof of the spectre's identity. I myself have never encouraged the belief that I saw "this thing," as Hamlet says. I am much more inclined to believe that it was the sleepy, and restless, and half unconscious Belpêche, that wandered in his dotage into the room where I lay, quietly opening and shutting the doors, the well oiled hinges of which did not betray the mortality of the opener and shutter. I wish to think that Ranger crept upon my bed and trembled there only from the natural timidity of his disposition, and I endeavor to discard all that is *super* in the whole adventure.

Still I do not venture to pronounce a positive opinion. I leave to theorists the task of balancing contending reasonings; and, for my own part, I conclude as I began, by asserting, in contradiction to the proverb, that "SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING."

NOTE.

A note inserted in the original edition and now reprinted in this (page) told how much I was disappointed at not being able to procure some documents connected with the circumstances that gave rise to this story. It would be but a trespass on the reader to say more on

that subject here. The matter which is extraneous to the absolute facts of the case is to be taken as at best an attempt to sketch lightly the manners of a not celebrated class of the French people.

That class like all others, has its faults as well as its merits. The latter, in my opinion, preponderate; but while I have endeavored to do justice to the one, I have not spared the other. The number of persons qualified by actual observation to pronounce on the truth or the errors of the pictures here presented must be from among that comparatively small circle of travellers, who have, like myself, mixed with the natives of almost every grade, and judged of each not merely from observations of any one singly, but the only sure standard—*comparison*. To such travellers I fearlessly submit my sketches. All others will I hope take them upon trust.

THE
CONSCRIPT'S BRIDE.

"I was [once] the admiration of all who beheld me. What was
I now." GODWIN.



THE CONSCRIPT'S BRIDE.

CHAPTER 1.

It was fete day in the village of Flixecourt, in Picardy, but not exclusively there; for it was one of those national festivals, when the whole country pours forth its feelings in concurrent streams of gladness. It was a week or two before the consummation of that annual union which joins spring to summer—

A season between June and May,

when the coyness of the vernal bride melts in tepid showers, beneath the sighs of her glowing lover. It was, in fact, the feast of the Pentecost, with us familiarly called Whitsuntide; and it wanted two hours to noon as I stood on the rising ground northward of the village, and looked upon the valley extending at either side. The verge of the horizon all around was formed by a ridge of sloping eminences; and the hallowed circle beneath them was a pastoral vale, with Flixecourt for its centre.

The great road between Aberville and Paris lay close to my left, but I descended a little, so as to lose sight of it entirely, for the rest of the scene owned no fellowship with the highways. A breeze sporting across the earth gave motion to the corn-blades and herbage which covered it. This undulating carpet was chequered with the brightest tints. Crimson patches of clover and sain-foin were contrasted with fields of yellow-flowered trefoil, with green varieties of grass and flax, and greyish shades of unripe barley, which waved over large spaces of the unenclosed plain, and looked in the distance, like the heaving bosom of the sea. Many footpaths wound through these fenceless fields. Groups of peasant girls came tripping along

them, their heads just visible above the corn, and the white lappets of their caps seeming to move over it like sea-birds skimming the waves. There was not one cloud abroad. My shadow, stretching away towards the west, was the only dark spot between the brilliant blue above and the bright scene beneath me. The odor of clover and trefoil came floating on every smell of air; and an invisible choir of larks were trilling their songs far up the sky, each independent note dying faintly down, as it echoed from the very vault of Heaven.

The contemplation of such scenes is at all times delicious, when we take in draughts of enjoyment through every sense thus acted on. But most of all, when mankind is in harmony with Nature's less dignified productions as it was on the day which I describe.

Group after group of peasants passed by me. Nothing could be gayer than the colors of the gowns, and coats, and kerchiefs which they wore; nothing more blooming than the flowers they carried, nothing more light nor graceful than their gait; but not one individual displayed that boisterous mirth, so indicative of rustic happiness, in almost every nation except France. There, in comparison with other countries, one seldom hears a joyous carol burst from a band of rural revellers, nor does the lightness of their hearts

Turn, as it leaves the lips, to song.

There is, on the contrary, a decorum in their mirth which prevents its exuberance, throws a tempering shade across their pleasures, and gives to them a tone of courtesy rather than of joy. But this must not be mistaken, as superficially it might, for insensibility. Comfort is, in truth, as common to the French peasant as is the air he breathes. His pleasures are as usual as his meals or his repose. His climate allows him to live in the constant exercise of rural sports and out-of-door indulgences. They are to him no rarities; and it is only things uncommon that call forth a strong excitement. Amusement is so blended with his habits and pursuits, that even while he is gayest he has time for thought. The riot of an Irish cottier's brief interval of joy might seem more genuine than his—but *that* is not enjoyment. It is the forced forgetfulness of woe—if, indeed, it can be thought to come from the mind at all; or is not rather the mere struggle of youthful blood against the wasting miseries of ill-fate.

The tolling of the church bell seemed to cause a quickened movement among the peasantry, and led my observation to the building itself, towards which every body was pressing, with an anxiety more animated than mere devotion could awaken. The period I treat of is so far back as the year 1814. I, insensibly following the general movement, struck into a path that led towards the church, through a deep hollow at one side of the village, forming a kind of rustic suburb, composed of detached cottages, standing irregularly in plots of garden ground, and thick plantations. Several observations which caught my ear as I moved along, led me to expect some ceremony, although I could not ascertain of what kind, beyond the mere church service. The *patois* in which the people conversed was not quite in-

telligible to me; so I stepped on still faster than they did, and soon reached the foot of the rising ground on which the church was placed. While I looked upwards, examining the appearance of the simple edifice, its white-washed walls and spireless steeple cheerfully reflecting back the sunbeams, a pressure of the people within became evident towards the door-way, and a party soon issued from it, which was followed by a crowd that gazed with looks of much interest, mingled with respect.

The party consisted of about half a dozen men, and as many females, all evidently of a class superior to the crowd which followed them, and easily distinguished by their air and costume, as belonging to a rank of society which in the country parts of France is so thoroughly respectable. I mean those proprietors of small estates, rendered numerous by the subdivisions of property, whose station is half-way between the gentry and the peasants; but whose manners and acquirements allow them an affinity with the former, too close to be broken by their participation in the upright independence which characterizes the latter. They are, in short, that strong link in the chain of social life in France which binds the highest with the lowest class; and while causing an imperceptible fusion of distinctions unknown in nations less refined, is itself the perfection of that *middle state* which philosophy and feeling alike pronounce to be the best.

My eyes glanced quickly on the several individuals of the group which approached me; but they were soon fixed upon the centre object, a woman dressed in the unacount and unbecoming habiliments of a *Sœur de la Charité*. She was not near enough to the place at which I stopped, when my attention was attracted towards her, to enable me to examine particularly the features shrouded by her projecting cap of stiffened white linen, with lappets hanging on her shoulders, and there joining the folds of a black serge dress with long tight boddice, large loose sleeves, and of a cut and pattern altogether the most ungraceful. A rudely carved crucifix, suspended to her girdle by a silver chain, was held in one hand, and the other was pressed between those of an elderly man, whose arm was linked with hers, but whether supporting or supported, I could not distinguish.

As I stood on my post of observation, the country people whom I had previously outwalked, came thronging after me; and as they perceived the principal figure in the animated scene, they one and all stopped in their career, fixed their whole observation on her, and while the bell tolled loud reproaches against their indifference, they left the church to the occupation of a few pious old souls, in whom curiosity had become extinct, or religion reanimated. Anxious ejaculations and corresponding gestures told the disappointment of each of the new comers who were evidently too late. I gave an attentive ear, to catch as much as possible the sense of the expressions of disappointment, loudly uttered or half murmured, according to the age or sex of the speakers.

"Too late, after all, Annette!" cried a smart ruddy-cheeked girl to her companion.

"Aye, thanks to your vanity, that *would* make you stay to stich that new lace round the lappets of your cap," retorted Annette, at

the same time adjusting the large bouquet of ranunculuses and May roses, which was pinned to her flowered cotton shawl, and had been deranged as she came along.

"My vanity! your coquetry, you mean, my dear. We had been here an hour ago, if you had at once given your sprigs of myrtle to Antoine, the gardener, in lieu of that *beautiful* bouquet," and a longing glance at the blooming bunch accompanied the words.

"I am sure I don't care a bachelor's button for Antoine or his bouquet," cried Annette, blushing deeply.

"Then do, my dear Celestine, give it to me," said Annette, her little sparkling eyes shooting forth rays of eagerness and avidity. But seeing that I could glean nothing from that couple of coquettes, I turned round to the exclamation of a middle aged man behind me—

"Poor Mademoiselle Valerie! she has then indeed taken the vows!"

"Alas! it's a sore sight to look on," replied the good woman who leant on his arm, with that easy indifference which distinguishes old married folks on a holiday,—"*a sore sight to see one so pretty and so nicely shaped, ruined by that hideous dress.*"

"The *dress* is the least part of the evil, Marie," said the husband, with a look that seemed meant to smother the last flickerings of his helpmate's conceit.

"Good God! what a weary pilgrimage for one so young—what a sacrifice of duty—what dangers she is about to encounter!" was softly murmured by an old and thoughtful looking man close by, in a pensive colored brown coat, and a problematical three cornered hat; and I was inclined to give all my attention to the under current of information which ran through his soliloquizing, when a smart-looking young fellow, in nankeen trousers, and a pink handkerchief, rushed up briskly and asked me, "Pray, Sir, is the ceremony really over? Do tell me how did she behave? Did she shew no regret? Did she weep? How did she look? pale, or flushed?"

I answered rather abruptly, that I had not been in the church; but my questioner only exclaimed, evidently thinking but of himself, "My God, what a pity to have missed it!" then, turning she ply to me again, "Did she say any thing? Nothing? Did not she say when she would set out?"

I found this intolerable; and, wheeling away, I took a path which led me nearer to the line of the approaching party. I felt all my own inquisitive propensities fermenting. I had heard enough to make them boil over.—"Young—pretty—well shaped—a vow—a sacrifice—a pilgrimage."—What better elements than these, what more is wanting, thought I to form such a combination as I delight in!

"And so thinking," will some of my readers perhaps cry out, "why not at once have satisfied your own curiosity and ours, by drawing freely on the loquacity of those who gave you these interesting hints, and thus have escaped the necessity of tantalizing yourself and us?"

But every one has his own way of coming to a conclusion—and I hate jumping at it. And besides, I have frequently known over-ardor for knowledge cause a troublesome re-action; as when a fast go-

ing tattler runs restive at a question, like a cross-grained horse that will stop from a full trot at the very touch of a spur. So, willing to let my subject develope itself in its own way, I leaned patiently against a tree; and having marked the group as mine, I leisurely watched its approach.

It was soon close to me; and I set myself quickly to work at my task of examination, as each new figure burst upon me. I first scrutinized my *heroine*, for I had without hesitation fixed the title on her. I next perused the open countenance of her arm-in-arm companion. That, said I, is her father; and that nice old lady in the satin cloak, black velvet bonnet, and plain taffeta gown, that is her mother; and those two simply yet elegantly dressed young women, with intelligent yet sorrowful eyes, they must be her sisters; and the two young men, they are her brothers; and so I went on, classifying all the individuals in their different degrees of relationship—and I was in every instance wrong. But I might have remained so to the present day, satisfied that I had made out a very interesting family party, of persons who, with one exception were *only* connected by pure friendship, and not by the muddy cement of blood, had I not luckily espied among the very persons on whom my fancy was playing these pranks, a gentleman whom I had met a week before, at a *table d'hôte*, in a neighboring town, where I had spent some idle days, killing time—the only fair game for a sportsman then in season.

That is her uncle, thought I, and through his means I shall know all; and just as he passed me I threw him a nod of recognition, and immediately took off my hat, not merely to him but to the whole party which was at the instant passing by. My salutation and many another from those near me, were courteously returned, in the lump as it were, by all save the *Sœur de la Charité*, who walked briskly on, with a fixed look, and a bright expression in her young and lovely face, as if she wandered not even in thought either to the right or left, but had a straightway purpose in her brain, that was not to be turned aside. She was very lovely, and about twenty years of age, of fair complexion, slight of form, with eyes of mingled blue and grey, whose dark lashes formed a fitting fringe to their fine-woven expression of tenderness and depth. Her hair was totally put out of sight, under her cap, but her broad forehead and arched brows gave evidence of mental charms which lacked no garniture; and she moved onwards, with an intent, but still not vacant gaze, that seemed to clear the path on which her mind was journeying.

While she and her friends passed on, all the varieties of expression common of French rustics were freely lavished. Admiration for her "beauty," blessings on her "pilgrimage," and prayers for her safety, were expressed in every tone of emphasis and cadence, from the loudest utterance to the lowest murmur, intermixed with those tongue-and-teeth interjections which do not amount to articulation, but speak still more feelingly.

My *table d'hôte* acquaintance dropped behind, and bustling towards me, he asked me if I had been in the church? When I replied in the negative, he exclaimed, "More the pity, for you lost a sight of uncommon interest."

"Why, it was only a young woman taking the vows of a *Sœur de la Charité*?" said I, with affected indifference.

"True! but *such* a woman, and for such a purpose!"

"It's nothing very uncommon," continued I, in the same tone, "it is merely to attend the sick poor, is it not?"

"Ah!" said he, "I see you know nothing about the matter. You must come along with me, my friend, and see this wonderful young creature, parting from her friends and setting out on her unparalleled mission."

I cannot help avowing that these words gave a check to my feelings; for I feared that my *heroine* would, after all, turn out to be a wayward fanatic, inflamed by the forced revival of exploded zeal, and rushing into life on some wild schemes misnamed devotion, but in truth *delirium*. But a moment's reflection drove this doubt from my mind. My thoughts flew back to the beaming, warm expression of her face, and I felt that it could not have sprung from aught that was distorted or impure.

"Come along, my friend," cried my companion. "We must not linger; and as we go on, I will explain somewhat of the mystery which hangs over this affair, and make you acquainted with all that I, for I am but an acquaintance myself, know of it."

I accordingly joined him in the straggling and imperfect procession, in which the absence of all form, and the presence of much feeling, supplied in interest what it wanted in effect. My good-natured and garrulous friend ran on roundly in his task of information. He told me as much as could be told in the same space of time, of the situation, and circumstance of the "*Sœur de la Charité*;" and he at once put to flight the reptile misgivings which had been settling on the wholesome fancies of my brain.

But in the brief time given to us, he could do little more than whet the edge of my curiosity. It required long days of social intercourse and careful cultivation of the opening confidence of more than one informant, to enable me to come at all I wished to know of my heroine's story. That *all* I now proceed to lay before my readers, and I hope they will not think the worse of my method or my motives, in cutting short all that relates to my own share in what followed. The nature of my stories forces egotism upon me, and the nature of man is a great bar against its good management. In the wish for correctness, I may say too much of self; in the dread of trespassing, I might say too little; but the latter evil is the least, and I shall now, at all events, choose it. And I will carry my caution a step farther, omitting all mention beyond this of that better half of myself and my adventures, poor Ranger, whose sins of heretofore intrusion, if they have met no pardon, must be visited on his master's head—not his.

CHAPTER II.

In the broad valley extending to the eastward of Flixecourt, and on the sides of the irregular hills which bound it, stand several houses belonging to those small proprietors, or gentlemen farmers, whose condition I have before slightly sketched. One of these residences, with about one hundred acres of land, had fallen into the possession of one Monsieur Lacourtelle upon the death of his father, by whom the property had been acquired during the turmoil of the Revolution, in what manner is not important to me or my story.

Mr. Lacourtelle, in following the pursuits of husbandry and the chase, which constitute almost the only employments of persons of his station, had but little leisure for the cultivation of refinements; and an indifference to every thing beyond the necessaries of life, moral and physical, was the natural consequence. He was a hardy independent man, with a rough hand, ready to open for a friend, or close upon a foe; and a heart, which though it might lie fallow for a season, was sure to yield a full crop of feeling when moistened by charity, and warmed by affection; but he was not one of those men whose habitual course of thought and action stamps on them the broad signet of benevolence, and marks them out to their fellows as objects of involuntary love and veneration. There was a harsh uncompromising manner about Mr. Lacourtelle, inherited from the revolutionary roughness of his father; and he was likely to hand down as much of it to Lucien, his only remaining son, as was capable of resisting two very powerful passions, which distinguished the youth, and which act more than any others, perhaps, to soften both mind and manners. These were love and vanity. I place them in their proper order of recedence here, rather from an estimate of their moral value, than to mark their station in the mind of Lucien; for with him the latter was most powerful, perhaps from having firmly enshrined itself within him ere the influence of the other came in contact with, and shook its pre-eminence.

The number of Mr. Lacourtelle's sons had dwindled by various casualties from six, an usually large quantity for a French family, to the one just mentioned. He never had a daughter; but Valerie, his sister's child, had always, from her birth, supplied the place of one, and held in Mr. Lacourtelle's affections a station as high as was occupied by his offspring. Having married when young, he was left a widower as early as most men become husbands; and not having been peculiarly happy in the wedded state, he had no inclination to purchase a second ticket in the same lottery. His affections became consequently fixed on his son and niece, but not with that intensity which generally results from the loss of one dear object, in reference to those left behind. There was a sort of selfishness mixed with the good nature of Mr. Lacourtelle, which made the latter feeling need a stronger effort to development, than is necessary with those of more spontaneous kindness. He thought more of his farm and his field sports, than of his son or his niece; and

while the former were cultivated with care and perseverance, the latter were left to nature and chance, two dangerous guides for youth and beauty. The consequence was obvious. The innate *feelings* (whose existence no philosopher will dispute), took the course which the sex and circumstances of each prepared. The boy ran wild and restive—the girl grew sensitive and shy. *He* sent his thoughts and feelings all abroad on the far sea of life, while *hers* became concentrated and domestic, retiring from such wide development, within that haven of seclusion, where the heart of woman buds and blossoms, like the flower that sends its odor from the shade.

Although differing thus widely in many points of character and temper, there were some feelings which seemed common to both—warmth of heart, generosity, humanity, and above all things a strong reciprocal affection. Never were two children more fondly attached to each other; and had there been any one, sufficiently interested or observant habitually with them, it would no doubt, have been surely and easily foretold what their childish fondness would in time ripen into. As it was, left wholly to themselves, they had only to love each other with all the warmth of infantine regard; and the one woman servant, and the man who performed the indoor offices of the family, forming together Mr. Lacourtelle's scanty household, were alone the coarse but pleased observers of the children's attachment. Mr. Lacourtelle attended to the cares of his farm, and enjoyed the relaxations of the chase, while the youthful companions followed the course of scanty education, gleaned at the village school, and revelled in the unrestrained enjoyments afforded by the rural retreat in which they lived.

The growth of a childish attachment is a trite subject, often treated of, and presenting in almost every case the same symptoms. The amalgamation of tempers and dispositions, imperceptibly taking place between two characters originally distinct, and even opposed, is a process as natural, as the junction of sap and fibre between branches of different trees engrafted together; and though in infancy they may look the very same, still in the ripening season the foliage and the fruits betray the discrepancy, and excite wonder at the mysterious union between objects so radically unlike: and so it was with Valerie and Lucien. Little variety was noticed from the cradle upwards, till at the mysterious age of fifteen, or somewhat earlier, the rapid revolution of nature began and ended ere the observers had thought of remarking that common development, which realizes the fiction of an instant growth from infancy to manhood. Lucien did really seem, at this season of change, to have passed at once, over all the usual gradations, which mark the feelings and manners of boys in general. I know not whether to call this prematurity or vigor of mind. The first carries with it the germs of decay in the very effort at distinction, and such could not certainly be discovered in Lucien's bodily or mental traits. He was tall, well formed, and strikingly handsome; and an early consciousness of his personal advantages gave to his whole air that forward bearing, which often passes for, if it be not superiority of mind. This certainty of possessing in his very looks a passport to admiration, added new force to the energies of his ardent temperament, and pushing him even before the station which

that alone would have induced him to take among his fellows, forced him to act a still more prominent part than that required. Consciousness of intellect, unallied with those external advantages, which philosophy vainly labors to depreciate, may, and does on many occasions, produce the same effect ; but genius itself often shrinks before the comely bully, who looks down on its possessor from an elevation of half a foot.

Allied with this self-satisfied feeling, thus acting upon Lucien, was an overweening vanity, its natural, but not inevitable associate, for a man may know his advantages, without forgetting himself. But in this instance memory was treacherous in proportion as consciousness was acute ; and Lucien, in short, believed that in person and mind, and in all the exercises to which both were subject in his narrow sphere of action, he could not have a rival : this was because he *had* not one. He was by far the most active, expert, and ready of his school companions, while he remained at school ; and when he gave up his attendance there, to assist his father in the superintendence of his estate, he became quickly remarkable for his proficiency in all the field sports which the neighborhood allowed. Thus, to his sufficient knowledge of his own language, and the capabilities of reading and writing it well, he added an ample proficiency in dancing, fencing, shooting, in riding at the ring, in playing quoits and nine-pins ; and in every *fete*, or fair, or *ducasse*, for leagues around, Lucien was sure to be the most admired of all the lads that entered the lists of rustic sports.

The striking specimen which Lucien afforded of the genus of national character to which he belonged, would have been incomplete had it not displayed the martial propensities which, at the period of his boyhood, so strongly distinguished his countrymen. It was then the meridian of the empire's greatness. Wagram, and Austerlitz, and Jena, had sent forth from the cannon's mouth the proclamations of its glory. The remotest villages of France vibrated to the sounds, and Lucien was not the last of her gallant youths whose heart bounded at each new blast from Victory's trumpet. At that period every young man in France seemed born a soldier. The feeling that they were destined to arms, was common to all. Their fathers, and all those of the generation to whom they were succeeding, either were serving in the armies or had served. The whole population was imbued with military ardor, and to be insensible to it was not to be a Frenchman. The consequence was, as all travellers in France must have observed, a half chivalrous, half barbarous impetuosity of manners, in which urbanity seemed to be thought inconsistent with valor. The feeling of property, of possessing a stake in the great game then playing, of having a land to fight for, not in name but in fact, was another powerful stimulus to the pride which filled the heart of the French soldier ; and the conscription, that dreadful drain upon the population, was almost looked on as a necessary support to national honor, and the only worthy path to individual distinction. Such was, at any rate, the aspect in which it appeared to such bold spirits as Lucien Lacourtelle, and the majority of the youths who had not yet shared the horrors to which it led its victims. But the vanity of Lucien was perhaps more powerful than any other feeling in filling him with a passionate desire for a military career. He gave his fancy full

scope to revel in the anticipated triumphs of fine clothes, lace, embroidery, and feathers. He marked the growing symmetry of his own form, gazed at the fine features which his looking-glass revealed, calculated the coming harvest of beard and mustachios, and never did a prisoner long more ardently for the bursting of his dungeon-door, than did Lucien for the day which, completing his eighteenth year, would make him competent to the slavery of being drawn for a soldier.

When the longed-for day arrived, and the swaggering importance of Lucien seemed at its height, he found out, as is usually the case with human wishes, that in the attainment of one, he had only acquired a resting-place for the growth of more. Those "Alps on Alps," which rise upon the mind's eye, had only begun their illusory freaks in that of the ardent boy. He was now *liable* to serve, but till called out for service he might as well have remained a child for ever.

The day of drawing lots under the conscription laws was not long in coming round. These calls for blood were now each year more frequent. Victory on victory was purchased by whole hecatombs of men. The years which had passed had, long ere they begun, furnished their quotas of recruits, and ere these had time to run their brief career, and perish for the conqueror's glory, new drafts were made for the years to come; and this system went on with such frightful rapidity, that the school room and the cradle were threatened with anticipated mortgages to supply the fierce expenditure of war. Had the curse of conquest lain much longer upon France, even unborn babes would have been the right of despotism, and mothers would have prayed for the reversal of nature's laws, and loathed the hour in which they brought forth a male child, unless deformity or disease gave hope of its escape from the general doom.

CHAPTER III.

The village of Flixecourt presented a striking picture of mixed animation and unhappiness on the wished for morning, when Lucien presented himself with the other young men of the commune, to tempt the chances of the fate he longed for. At an early hour the street was thronged with the inconsiderate youths, their anxious parents and relatives, and an assemblage of indifferent spectators, consisting of those veterans who had already gone through the test, and of individuals who from various causes were exempted from the risk. A large proportion of females, actuated by varied emotions of solicitude, made up the crowd that thronged round the office of the mayor, and pressed for entrance into this place of doom. The village functionaries occupied their elbow-chairs, the sherry-tree backs

and rush-bottoms of which supported a mass of rustic dignity amply proportionate to that which filled the costly state chairs of the capital itself. The business of the day was entered on with as much solemnity as though the imperial council chamber had been the scene of trial; and the sentence of fate from the petty magistrate was looked for with as much respect as though the lips of the emperor were about to utter the decree.

Silence being proclaimed, the names of those liable to serve were loudly called in alphabetical order, and one by one they stepped up to the magisterial table, put forward their hands, drew forth from the vase containing the numbers that one which decided for the time their hopes and fears, and filed off immediately to the right or left, pursuant to the chance which pronounced them conscripts or free-men.

Varied and interesting were the exhibitions of feeling which took place. Some of these young men, hurried away by the factitious impulse of military ambition, danced and leaped with joy at the announcement of the luck which made them soldiers. Others, struck with anguish at the sentence that tore them from their happy homes, could scarcely muster pride or courage sufficient to preserve them from some unmanly show of grief. Again, there were seen, among those who had escaped the lot, either the violent expression of real or feigned regret, or the unbounded display of natural delight. One youth rushed into the open arms of his rejoicing mother—another embraced his anxious and trembling sweet-heart—a third vowed a pilgrimage of grateful thanks to the patron Saint who had preserved him to his parents. Nor were these outward indications of joy or grief confined to the young men alone. Loud bursts of hysteric laughter, or piercing lamentations from relatives and friends, followed the declaration which pronounced the fate of each new name; and as Lucien Lacourtelles strode forward, with panting anxiety, to answer the call upon him, he was stopped by the falling body of a poor woman, who sunk down in strong convulsions, as the preceding name, that of her favorite son, was followed by the announcement of a number within those limited for service, and which consequently forced him away.

But Lucien felt for the moment indifferent to all but his own sensations. Burning with impetuous ambition, he thought only of the long career of opening glory which he saw before him. Danger was not for a moment presented to his view. His heart beat high with hope, and he felt his face flushed as he presented himself at the table. He rapidly passed his fingers through his curling locks, and looking round in conscious satisfaction at the admiration which his beauty excited, he stood erect, with an expression of countenance, half smiles, half frowns, and he put his hand boldly into the vase. The chances that he would have drawn a number above that required for service were considerably enhanced from the circumstance of the lad who preceded him having been below it. It was not likely that two successive lots would have met the same luck. The by-standers, therefore, uttered many an exclamation, meant to encourage Lucien, giving assurances that he had nothing to fear. But he, with

the common feeling that leads mankind to believe in what they wish for, had a strong presentiment that he should draw one of the numbers he desired; and he listened with impatient expectation to the slow and cautious tones of the wary Greffier, whose duty it was to examine the numbers and announce them as they were drawn and handed to the mayor, and finally passed into his hands. The number was proclaimed. It was below the mark—and Lucien was consequently a conscript. An expression of astonished regret broke from some individual in the crowd, and was echoed loudly through it. "*Vive l'Empereur!*" cried Lucien, striking the table with his open hand, then waving his hat above his head, and stamping on the floor with an air that seemed to command an according shout. His bold demeanor and manly tone produced the effect he desired, and a general repetition of his enthusiastic exclamation shook the unaccustomed and white-washed walls of the mayor's cottage chamber.

Lucien filed off to the little inner-room, where sat the council of revision, consisting of the agents for the conscription and the surgeon appointed to examine the young soldiers, and see that no physical impediment debarred them of the privilege of becoming "food for powder," or a mark for bullets. Lucien was pronounced perfect. The surgeon declared him a model of symmetry; the agents registered his name in their muster roll; and the serjeant who was to take charge of the new levy, embraced him with a brotherly delight, and made him by anticipation a field marshal of France. He then tied a bunch of tri-colored ribbons round his hat; and Lucien, thus distinguished, sallied out into the street, where a number of curious and interested rustics waited anxiously for the appearance of each new-drawn recruit.

A murmur of regret mixed with admiration of Lucien's bold demeanor and handsome appearance, was heard in the crowd as he pushed through with a haughty air; and he passed on, regardless of their kind expressions, but not insensible to the admiration he excited, and which never failed to command his attention. He walked quickly onward, without turning to the right or left—soon cleared the long street of which the village is composed, and after mounting, for a little, the rising ground to the north, beyond the extremity of the street, he struck off to the eastward, by the little path which still leads through the pastures and meadows in the direction of his home.

Elated in spirits, absorbed, not in thought but in forgetfulness, a sensation of chaotic confusion alone occupied his brain. His movements sympathized with this light unheeding frame of mind, and he stepped forwards briskly, following his path over hill and valley, with instinctive rather than reasoning correctness. Wholly wrapped up in this intense, but not unfeeling selfishness, he did not give a thought to others, nor calculate for an instant on the effect which the news he had to tell was likely to produce on his father and Valerie. He was insensible to the abruptness of his coming appearance before them, with the badge of his fate flaunting and streaming from his hat, and the intelligence of their misfortune in thus losing him evidenced in the exultation of his look and manner. This might, in a modest mind, have arisen from a want of confidence in its own im-

portance, not believing the happiness of others to be dependent in its fate, and consequently overlooking the effect it was likely to produce; but such was not the cause of Lucien's inconsiderate bearing. He knew full well his own value, and made no under estimate of his importance in the feelings of his father and his cousin; and his temporary forgetfulness of them was solely an effect of the selfish vanity which, till that hour, was the leading impulse of his character. But as he rapidly approached the house, and suddenly raising his eyes, caught its full view before him, the recollection of its occupants, of himself, and of the relative positions in which they all stood, flashed across his mind. He snatched his hat from his head, tore the ribbons from around it, and thrust them into the breast of his coat, passed his hand for a moment over his flushed and throbbing brow, and endeavoring to compose himself to a more calm demeanor, he walked towards the house with a firm but measured step.

But he was not unobserved. From a window, looking down upon the lawn he had just entered, and the hazel copse he had emerged from, a pair of anxious eyes had watched and closely marked those actions of his too dilatory sense of delicate consideration. Valerie had been long waiting his approach, long even before he could have been reasonably expected to return. But when affection is on the watch, reason is an unheeded time-teller. Before it was possible that the business of the conscription could have been well begun at Flixecourt, Valerie had taken her station in the room which commanded the path leading from it, in that state of restless hope inseparable from expectancy, and her bright eyes sent their glances far across the fields, as if their attraction had power to draw along the viewless object of their search. From the same universal weakness of our nature, the belief in what we desire, which had filled Lucien with a presentiment that he should be drawn for the conscription, Valerie had all along indulged the expectation—almost the conviction—that he would not. The actual dread of such a calamity had never once crossed her mind, but she could not shake off a feeling of nervous and knowing insecurity, which is almost as agitating as apprehension, and to some minds worse than certainty. She did not suffer under the fear of ill, but she wanted to be assured of good; and in this state, more passive but more trying than the very knowledge of the worst, her anxious heart told, in redoubled palpitations, a false account of time.

At length she saw him coming. She marked the agile bound with which he sprang across the stile that divided the coppice from the lawn; and she read in his quick and forward air, security to her hopes, to her happiness, and to him. A faint scream of joy burst from her, and she rose from her seat to fly towards him. But she caught his sudden pause, as the house seemed to fix his attention. She marked the hurried and agitated movement with which he tore the ribbon from his hat and placed it in his bosom—and the agonizing quickness of affection too plainly seized upon the rest. The whole story of his fate and her's seemed told, and the broad volume of affliction was self-opened to the deep-searching glance of instantaneous grief. Valerie tottered to a chair. A sickness of heart suc-

ceeded to its momentary expansion. She felt the blood rush from her freezing cheeks. Her eyes swam. But she had a fine and vigorous mind—and even in this stage of acute and sudden suffering, she rose up against the weakness which she could not avert. To meet Lucien was the immediate impulse of her recollection; in joy or in woe, her first movement was towards him. She therefore slowly and with faltering steps quitted the room; but when she reached the stairs, she was forced to pause, and lean against the banisters, for support from the faintness which returned upon her more overpoweringly than at first. She heard Lucien's step as he approached the house—she saw him open the door and enter—she marked him coming towards her—she felt herself folded in his arms—but she seemed riveted to the spot where she stood; her tongue cleaved to her mouth, her sight began to fail, she heard not even the accents of *his* voice—and, for the first time in her life, Valerie fainted away.

The rustic habitation of Mr. Lacourtelle was not accustomed to this so common occurrence in the elegant mansions of fashion. The enervations of refinement had not reached the nerves of its occupants; but, as has been seen, feeling did not hold a less mighty sway within their hearts. Lucien confounded and shocked by the spectacle of Valerie's pale and insensible form, lost for a while all thought of self, and with hurried movement he bore her down stairs, and into the little parlor, which was the common sitting-room of the family. He threw open the window, and applied cold water to her forehead, and forced some into her lips. A less confident mind would, in such a moment, have prompted an immediate call for help; but that of Lucien contained none of the elements of weakness, which in times of difficulty or peril seems to lean for support on others. He never thought of assistance but such as he could himself afford; and as Valerie's eyes opened wildly upon him, he endeavored to bring her back to consciousness by sounds of the most soothing endearment.

Called thus into life, the lovely girl soon revived, and a sense of her situation and of his came rapidly upon her. As she recollected all, a shuddering crept across her frame, and she felt sinking again; but she was saved from this relapse by a copious flood of tears—that dew of the heart, which waters the parched feelings and saves the mind from withering.

"Dear Valerie," said Lucien, "what is the cause of this? are you ill indeed, or is this but emotion at my return?"

"Your return—your return, Lucien? Oh! do not think to deceive me—I know you are going from us forever!"

"My dearest girl what can have put such a notion into your head? Forever! what a frightful word. Come, come, you have me with you still—you see I am come back."

"Do not think to deceive me Lucien. You are come back, but to leave us—and to part with you at all, seems forever."

"But why suspect all this, my Valerie—I have not told you this ill news?"

"Yes, yes, you have—this has betrayed you—I saw you hide it here!"

With these words she drew the bunch of ribbons from his bosom,

pressed it between his hands, laid her head upon the table, and, sobbing convulsively, she bathed the gaudy emblem with her tears.

Lucien was utterly astonished. He had a strong affection for his cousin, his playmate, his earliest and almost his only friend. He was conscious of her affection for him—but he had never till that moment suspected that she *loved* him, and never knew till then what it was to love. He had not thought of analyzing the feelings which Valerie had excited. He had been happy when with her, but not wretched while away. His attachment seemed that of relationship and habit, but his heretofore security left him ignorant of what it really was. He had till then, held *himself* a more prominent place in his own consideration; but the speaking events of this awakening scene told him irresistibly that the supremacy of self was at an end.

Perhaps the most intoxicating feeling of the mind is the first conviction of being truly loved. To one of Lucien's temperament it was almost insupportably delicious. All thought of suffering or sorrow vanished before it. An exulting consciousness filled his breast. He knew and felt at the same instant that all the calm and brotherly feelings he had believed in, were no longer his. A magic touch had changed the dull compounds into passion's brightest ore, and the heart's alchymy had gained its utmost triumph. He pressed Valerie's hand in his. He held her to his bosom, and felt her's throb like it. A whirlwind of new sensations rushed through his breast and heart, which revealed, like another landscape at the melting of its snowybrain. The chill pure covering of friendship dissolved from his veil, the bursting germs and blossoming delights that had been working their silent unsuspected growth beneath.

Lucien's first sensations was one of unbounded happiness. He felt a proud glow of importance on his cheek and brow. He gazed on his companion, kissed off her tears as if no bitterness was in them, held her in his arms with a triumphant pressure, and devoured with eager eyes and new born feelings the ripening form and eloquent features of the lovely girl.

Valerie had just attained the earliest stage of womanhood. She was about a year younger than Lucien, and, like him, perhaps more advanced in person and in feelings than the generality of young persons of the same age. Without knowing why, she had latterly begun to feel a reserve, an awkwardness, a something she could not define, in Lucien's presence, and a sensation still more puzzling while he was away. Naturally reserved, she seemed to shrink still farther within herself—the only retirement left as a deeper shelter from her habitual seclusion. This timidity had been rapidly growing upon her; and now, pressed in her cousin's arms for the thousandth time, she trembled with an unknown sense of fear and shame; and in proportion as his looks grew warmer, and his words more glowing, the undeveloped sense of female modesty overpowered her with its mystic and embarrassing force.

They marked each other in mute and reciprocal surprise. She could not comprehend his air of happiness, at the moment of parting, perhaps for ever. He was astonished at her coldness, while he seemed to be transported to a world of unimagined bliss. There were

no words for them ; but by degrees they interchanged ideas through a medium less deceptive, for looks and sighs spoke a language that rarely lends itself to guile.

After an interval, whose duration they could not themselves have told, Lucien appeared by degrees to have recovered the mastery over speech. He made many faint and ineffectual efforts to express his sentiments, but he could for many minutes give utterance but to monosyllables, or short and common-place phrases. At length he succeeded in saying, with many a pause between the words, and with impassioned looks and gestures filled up each chasm.

"Can it—can it be possible Valerie? Do you feel all this for me? All this deep sorrow at losing me?"

"Indeed, indeed, I do, Lucien, more a hundred times than I can or would express. My heart is almost breaking at the thought of your leaving me—*us*, I would say. What will your father——"

"Dearest, dearest Valerie, let us not think of him—*yet*. I am so delighted to find that you love me, so surprised at the way in which I love *you*, that I can think of nobody nor nothing but you. And you do love me as much as this, quite as much as this?"

"As much as is possible—as much as I could, or *ought* dear Lucien," murmured the blushing girl, confused and abashed at the growing warmth, and increasing pressure of her cousin.

"As you *ought*! and how much is that, Valerie? Ought there to be any bounds to your affection? Should you not love me as much as ever you can—more than ever you did—more than any one ever loved another, except as I love *you*? You should and will love me this way, Valerie—tell me that you do."

"I cannot say all I feel, Lucien—I hope I do not love you too much."

"Too much, too much! No, no," answered he, kissing her almost to affection, "that is impossible. We must love each other, even more than this, my own Valerie. There must be no bounds to what we feel, and think, and say to one another. I feel as I never felt before——"

"So do I, I am sure," said Valerie. "I hope in heaven, I feel rightly and correctly."

"Good God! what do you mean, Valerie? What are you afraid of—why do you shrink from me?"

"I don't exactly know, Lucien—but I believe I *am* afraid of you—or of myself perhaps—I do not know what is the matter with me. My brain is reeling round," and here she laid her head upon his shoulder, and sobbed, and wept, in a burst of mingled sorrow and shame, and fear.

This deep display of emotion brought Lucien to himself. A new feeling rose upon him, an awakened sense of propriety and respect towards her, which he irresistibly obeyed without stopping to define. He imprinted one calm kiss upon her forehead—and gently disengaging her from his embrace, he placed her again upon her chair; then sat down upon another beside her, and with trembling hands he held one of hers firmly, but not ungently clasped, while he poured forth in unstudied phrase the feelings that rushed warm and rapidly from his heart.

CHAPTER IV.

During the early part of the important day just described, and while the pair most interested in its results were occupied as has been seen, Mr. Lacourtelles was following his usual avocations on his farm—but not in his usual careless and common-place frame of mind. He was not so indifferent to the fate of his son, involving as it did his own interest, as not to know that, on that day he ran the risk of being torn from his home, and deprived, at once, of his liberty and of the power of rendering his need of assistance to the management of the little property that in the course of nature ought one day to be his.

Mr. Lacourtelles had never been drawn for the conscription. His early marriage had saved him from the liability, and by continual good luck he had previously escaped the fatal lot. Emboldened by his own escapes he had calculated with almost certainty, that Lucien would not be unfortunate enough to draw a number against which the chances were three to one. Under this impression, he saw his son sally out in the morning to the place of trial, and he himself went forth without uneasiness on the subject. For a couple of hours, he quietly continued his superintendence of what was going forward, and gave his orders as unconcernedly as though the culture of his fields had no contrast in the blood-stained scenes of many a ravaged waste, to act in some of which his only child might be at that moment doomed. The tolling of a bell, that speaking token of the flight of time, is perhaps the thing of all others the most frequently effective in rousing the thoughtless or the reflective to a sense of the things that are. In the present case it was the deep tone from the belfry of Flixecourt that awoke Mr. Lacourtelles to a recollection of what affected him so nearly.

"One o'clock!" cried he, in surprise, as the single note came vibrating upon the air. "Is it possible!" and he examined his watch, for a confirmation of his doubts or the accuracy of the warning just given. "So late! why the drawing must be over by this time—it was to have begun at twelve precisely. I must go to meet him—he will be anxious to come up to the house, and set our minds at rest. Not that I have been uneasy—no, no. Poh! there can be no fear of him. Thirteen to be drawn for the commune out of fifty-two—that is more than three to one in favor of his escape. No, no, there is nothing to fear—yet—perhaps—it might chance—but—let's see, let's see.

About half of these expressions were addressed to the men around him, the other half to himself, as he quitted the field and walked, in constantly growing speed, towards the house. Little by little his confidence diminished, and his anxiety increased; and when he reached the garden gate, which led towards the rear of the house, he stopped for a moment, to wipe his brow, and remove the collateral evidence of his uneasiness, too plainly stamped upon his looks. He

entered the house by the kitchen, where the woman servant was preparing her soup and *ragout* for dinner, unconscious of the scene of mixed distress and delight that had been for some time passing in the parlor. Had she known it, her culinary duties would not have been so leisurely performed, for she, like the generality of servants in France, had a deep interest in the affairs of the family she lived with, nor did her employers feel themselves degraded by her presuming to consider herself entitled to love as well as to serve them. She was not aware of Lucien's return from Flixecourt; and Mr. Lacourteille opened the door, and walked into the room where he and Valerie sat, unconscious of the kind of *tete-a-tete* he interrupted, and unexpected by the couple of whom it was composed.

His abrupt appearance was as startling to them, as was their unlooked-for presence to him. A moment of confusion, almost equal to what guilt itself might have caused, suffused the cheeks of Valerie with crimson, and the source of her tears seemed at once dried up. Lucien felt a mixture of emotions, in which criminality certainly had no part, but the very feeling of concealment is to an ingenuous and unpractised mind, even on a point in itself innocent, sufficient to give an appearance of crime. Lucien therefore looked as if his newly found secret was at once discovered, and as though its betrayal had covered him with infamy. But, fortunately, the previous anxiety of his father did not give him time for acute remark, nor allow him to place any bad construction on the embarrassment, which might have justified the worst. Mr. Lacourteille saw only the confirmation of the doubts as to Lucien's safety, which had in his own despite been creeping upon him. He suspected nothing more, and only gave a new proof of the egotism with which the mind passes, by external sources of reasoning, to account from those within it, for facts that are out of its control. His sudden corditude of what he had so lately believed so improbable, filled him with an unwonted agitation, and all the warm and affectionate feelings of his nature, arose in unusual display.

"Good God!" cried he, stopping suddenly, and looking at Lucien, "I suspected this. Something told me it was so—what a misfortune for us all!"

There was very much of sorrow and nothing of anger in this speech; but Lucien and Valerie both saw only a wrathful reproach on the countenance, that in reality expressed deep grief. They thought for the instant of but one thing to be suspected. The instinct of new born love told them that secrecy was its chief omen, and its sensitiveness whispered that discovery involved destruction.

Lucien in his confusion attempted to stammer some words he knew not what—but a quick return to his presence of mind, convinced him that silence was the safest course for a while. He did not therefore interrupt his father as he went on; and a full weight seemed taken from his heart, and that of Valerie, as they discovered the real bearing of Mr. Lacourteille's regret.

"Do not attempt to deny the fact, my boy, nor think I am not able to support the shock, bad as it is. But what ill luck! To be drawn the very first time! My poor child, and must you be torn from us! What

can I, what can Valerie do in our loneliness? It is indeed a great affliction—great ill luck. Kiss me, Lucien, kiss me Valerie—I never dreamt of this. I was too secure in the happiness of having you both. I did not know how happy I was—I wanted this stroke of fate to show me what I enjoyed, only by making me lose it. So, Lucien, you are drawn—a conscript—a soldier? Aye, Valerie, you may well weep over those cursed ribbons, that were not wanting to tell me the truth. I knew it, even when I was persuading myself it could not be.”

“It is true, my dear father,” said Lucien, drawn back by his father’s grief to a sense of his own situation, and with his wonted facility, forgetting a while the suffering it involved, “It is true I am a soldier, and entering on a career of honor and glory for us all.”

“Honor and glory, my brave boy! But what is to become of me and Valerie? “and here, overpowered by the suddenness and force of parental suffering, he could not suppress the tears, which had long lain frozen in his commonly unsusceptible bosom. This extraordinary display of sensibility deeply affected Lucien, who took one of his father’s hands in his and affectionately kissed it, while Valerie, sympathizing but too painfully in her uncle’s sorrow, threw her arms round his neck, and completed a group of genuine distress—one of thousands at the same time displayed, in the country scourged by military glory.

The rest of the day passed over in sadness, but not unmixed with bright gleams of hope and sunbright visions of happiness to come. Mr. Lacourtelle, after some short time, left the children, as he called them, or the lovers, as *we* must designate them, to themselves. And thus left, they soon abandoned themselves to the flood of new sensations which irresistibly hurried them away. Valerie’s reserve dissolved before the ardour of Lucien. She listened to the glowing language in which he gave utterance to his passion, and, by degrees, lost all sense of pain in frankly avowing her own. While thus hurried on, the sudden recollection of Lucien’s situation, their approaching separation, the dangers he was about to run, the dreary blank which was to surround her, came upon her with tenfold anguish; and she shudderingly hid her head in his bosom, as if to shut out the frightful images which burst upon her view. She was again reassured—again forgetful—and again terrified, by fears which possessed too much the consistency of truth to be treated as mere fancies. Lucien therefore combated them with all the force of natural, yet boyish reasoning—and thus passed the remainder of the day. Mr. Lacourtelle was almost wholly alone. He retired to his own chamber, where he remained for several hours seated at his *secretaire* with pen in hand, in some deep calculation of ways and means, or pacing the floor, with an anxious tread that kept time to the agitated feelings below. The dinner was a matter of mere form, and the early vegetable supper was placed on the table as usual, but taken off again untasted. More than half the night was consumed before any one thought of bed, and the rest passed over without the aid of sleep.

Lucien rose early, having previously heard his father get up and leave his room; and on going down stairs himself he was surprised to learn that Mr. Lacourteille had some time before mounted his horse and ridden away, leaving word for Lucien and Valerie that he had gone to Amiens, and would not return before night. Whatever might be the sudden business that called him away, the young couple, thus once more left to themselves, most heartily rejoiced in his absence; and they could scarcely believe it possible, when the well-known trot of the old horse, and Mr. Lacourteille's arrival, told them that the day was gone.

Mr. Lacourteille was affectionate, but silent and thoughtful. He retired early to rest, evidently fatigued and ill at ease in mind. Lucien and Valerie were unwilling to disturb him by inquiries as to the business of his journey; and long after he retired they continued to consume the night in deep debate.

Worn out by the agitation of the previous days, Lucien slept heavily the following morning, and he sprang from bed with a sudden pang at seeing the sun full risen, and recollecting that this was the last day he had to spend at home. On the next the sergeant was to march with his little band of conscripts from Flixecourt, and this alone was left to Lucien to make his preparations for departure. He hastened below, and found Valerie waiting for him in the parlor, her eyes betraying the sleepless night she had passed, and her agitation proving who ill able she was to support this last sad day of preparation. Lucien learned with surprise that his father was again gone to Amiens, and could not repress an expression of astonishment that he had chosen to pass *this* day from home. But Valerie's kindness of spirit found a ready reason, in her uncle's wish to be spared the pain of the previous hours, which are even worse than that of parting, and Lucien was easily reconciled to what left him another unbroken day wholly to Valerie and love.

Amidst all her sorrow, the considerate and soothing attentions of her sex did not abandon the amiable girl. With a method and carefulness worthy of the most tranquil state of mind, she prepared all the objects destined to form the scanty provision of Lucien's knapsack. Lucien's vanity was deeply wounded when he had time for reflection, and read carefully over the undignified list, given to him by the sergeant, of articles which he was to carry on his back. Brushes for cleaning his own shoes brought no actual sense of degradation, as French philosophy is easily reconciled to any services performed for one's self. But what most hurt his pride was the limitation of *four shirts* in this shabby inventory. His father, like most people of his class in France, had full three times as many dozens of this luxury. Lucien himself had a large stock, independent of his right of inheritance to his father's. He could not, therefore, resist a blush of humiliation as he saw Valerie arrange *four* of the best and finest, with the collars and frills worked in her own neat embroidery. From his own confession, this was his first feeling of distaste to the career he had so lately gloried in, and the wound it gave to his self consequence was, for the moment, more poignantly felt than even the misery of the morrow's parting. For, by a strange commixture

of motives and feelings, that very parting contained the elements of consolation. The frequent insufficiency of events that are close to us to excite emotions as strong as those that spring from anticipation or memory, was fully exemplified on this occasion. The anguish of separation from her whom he now found himself to love so dearly, seemed to fall with a deadened and stupifying weight upon him; while the triumph of possessing her heart, the looked-for joy to be felt in the reception of her letters, the delight to be awakened by the perusal of his, the importance of the conviction that she lived alone for him, the very certainty of the pain his absence would cause her, contributed to give an additional swell to the tide of vaingloriousness that heaved his mind, and raised it above the level of its immediate suffering.

Valerie's feelings were of unmitigated woe. She saw only the actual reality of the scene before her. The certain aspect of Lucien's departure was too painfully close to allow of distant ameliorations to soften its effect; and if she did, for an instant, carry her thoughts beyond it, it was only to withdraw them from the desolate waste of loneliness which broke upon her. She could not bear up against this, and warm drops of sorrow from her full eyes bedewed every object which, with affectionate care, she had selected for her lover's wants. The very lock of hair destined as an amulet to hang upon his breast was soaked in tears.

All was arranged—the minutest trifle was again and again examined; many superfluous nick-nacks, too insignificant for a soldier's comfort, were added by Valerie, and proudly, yet kindly rejected by Lucien; subjects of conversation exhausted, yet words fast flowing, when the day closed, and night set in without any appearance of Mr. Lacourteille. This absence, at such a time, was strange beyond imagining. The hours were counted by Lucien and Valerie, with increasing anxiety and agitation. The moon rose and sunk, the stars glimmered, twinkled, and hid themselves from the morning light, which came upon the lovers, to find them pale and woe-begone. The servants had passed, like them, a night of anxious watching; and the whole party were out of the house by sun rise, distributed on the knolls and rising grounds, with anxious eyes turned in the direction by which the far-sought father and uncle and master should return.

CHAPTER V.

Valerie and Lucien stood together on an eminence that rose above the garden, and overlooking, at some distance, the landscape, the chief features of which I attempted to sketch in the opening pages of this tale. The newly risen sun had tinged the whole with his splendid coloring, and the soft grey tints of dawn gave a melancholy effect to the still and misty scene. The young lovers gazed upon it ; he with feelings softened and subdued ; she with a tenderness of wo, not inspired by, but in harmony with the material solemnity of the scene. Their looks were turned towards the road leading from Amiens, but their thoughts flew far beyond its visible limit ; for in that direction lay the route traced out for the conscripts, as that which they were to follow, in search of the army, of victory, and fame. While the lovers gazed thus, some acute recollection now and again rousing them from their reverie, and making them turn to each other with a closer expression of attachment, the rustic population of the valleys around began to fill the air with the harmony of morning sounds. The voices of the husbandmen, the songs of birds, the bleating of cattle, the hum of insects, were mingled together. The smoke rising up from scattered cottages and hamlets, gave a softened animation to the pastoral scene—and every thing of sight and sound combined to bring most painfully to Lucien's mind, the atmosphere of innocence and peace he was going to abandon, for the turmoils and perils of the world.

While he mused on the scene, and Valerie hung sadly on his arm, a startling and terrible sound broke upon them. It was that of a drum, beaten in rattling defiance of all the quiet it disturbed, and of indifference to the torturing associations of thought which it aroused. Lucien almost sprang from the ground when his ear caught the long roll, which he knew for the summons to him and his fellow conscripts throughout the neighborhood.

"For Heaven's sake, Lucien," cried Valerie, "what moves you so ? Oh, say what it is."

"Do you not hear the drum, my own Valerie ? My hour is come—that is the call which orders me away. I have but little more of time at my command. Let us hasten to the house. I must not seem unprepared when the serjeant arrives."

Valerie trembled with agitation. She did not attempt to speak. She could with difficulty walk ; but summoning all she had left of resolution, and supported by Lucien, she reached the house. With hasty preparation. Lucien got his things in order. He had no assistance from Valerie, who sat in silent affliction on a chair beside him ; nor from either of the servants, as both man and woman, unaware of the nature of the signal, continued abroad searching for their master's approach, and were thus diverted from the more serious contemplation of her son's departure.

"Here he comes !" cried Lucien, looking from the window.

"My uncle—thank Heaven !" murmured Valerie, faintly, and rising from her chair.

"No, no, not my father—only the serjeant, accompanied by four or five of the conscripts—of my fellow-soldiers, Valerie."

Valerie had nothing to reply, and sank down again upon her seat.

The rattling of the drum was now heard in quick approach, and the serjeant with his followers came forward in fantastic movement, dizen'd out with ribbons, and the recruits displaying that half-military costume and soldier like air that seems to sit on them more easily than on the veterans of other nations, or at least of ours. A rude coarse chorus of a song, was shouted by the group as they advanced, either thoughtless or wishing to be thought so. The serjeant flourished his cane, and twisted his mustachios, and encouraged the young soldiers by all the exciting trickery of an experienced quack. Lucien came to meet them at the door, welcomed them with an air of gaiety—and was for an instant animated into somewhat of his late feelings, by the profuse display of the serjeant's badges of honorable service and reward, and by the apparent or real recklessness of the conscripts. He briefly explained his personal readiness to march, only begging the serjeant to enter the house and wait a while for his father's return, without which he declared he could not possibly start.

The serjeant, with a due display of courtesy and condescension, admitted the plea, and entered, leaving the youthful aspirants on the meadow before the door, jumping running and gambolling, to show at once the lightness of their heels and hearts. An hour or more passed over in this way, the serjeant running on in praise of a soldier's life, in promises of fame, and in descriptions of battles, which almost turned Lucien's head with pleasure, and made poor Valerie sick at heart. But Lucien's attentions reverted soon again into their natural channel. He gave all his care to her, and no longer lent his ear to the serjeant, who, like any other actor with a heedless audience, got weary and impatient, examined his watch with peevish gesture, and declared that the hour of marching could be no longer delayed. Ere Lucien's rising insubordination had time to exhale in angry vapors, the servants both came running in, with a gleam of satisfaction in their mourning faces, and announced Mr. Lacoartelle's approach. In a moment more he was really seen, pressing his foaming and jaded horse up the straight avenue of elms that led from the road, and all the lookers on were surprised to observe, that he carried behind him an additional pair of legs, while the face of a stranger was visible over his shoulder.

Arrived at the door, the person behind him sprang actively from the crupper, and as soon as he reached the ground, made a simple but rather graceful salutation to the group before him, marking, with the common politeness of his countrymen, his notice of Valerie by a particularly gallant obeisance. He was at first little heed'd by any of the party, and least of all by her. Her whole attention was given to her uncle, who dismounted from his horse with a less active movement than his fellow passenger, and when fairly on the ground, he received the welcomes which were showered upon him, with a countenance in which pleasure showed its victory over fatigue.

"My dear uncle," sobbed Valerie, "I am, indeed, rejoiced at your

return—but what could have kept you till the moment of Lucien's departure—he is on the very point of setting off."

"Dry your eyes, my dear niece—he is *not* setting off—not going to move. Do you think any thing could have kept me away but to keep him here? Come Lucien, my boy, kiss your father once again—you are not to be torn from us yet."

A scene of real embracing here took place, not the mere cheek-to-cheek salutations of ludicrous formality, but the hearty hug of parental energy on the one part, and the ardent pressure of young affection on the other. But there was a difference still greater between the manner of Mr. Larcourtelles and his son's. The fathers had that of positive certainty in the happiness he gave vent to, while Lucien showed that bewildered air which proved him to take the good news upon credit. Valerie was almost overcome by the sudden change from sorrow to joy, but she eagerly asked her uncle,

"How is this? What do you say, my dear uncle? Lucien does not leave us? For Heaven's sake explain—who has saved him?"

"This fine lad here," answered he, seizing the stranger's hand and cordially shaking it. "This gallant fellow, who has become his substitute, who goes for a soldier in his stead and gives us all back to joy once more."

The stranger here brought so fully to notice, stood carelessly looking on with no air of conscious merit, for the services thus vaunted. He was about nineteen or twenty years of age, neither good looking nor the contrary, somewhat rough in appearance, plain in his dress, and altogether putting forth no striking claims to attention. But Valerie at the time considered him as worthy of every possible distinction. It was one of those moments of the heart's supremacy, when thought and criticism are obscured, and when even the strict rules of common-place decorum are forgotten. Acting on the impulse of the instant, and abandoning the line of etiquette which manners prescribe to young French women of all classes, she flew towards this unknown saviour of her happiness, and stretching forth her hand, she addressed him, with almost breathless rapidity,—

"Oh, Sir! let me thank you—do pray accept my gratitude—you know not how happy you have made me—you have preserved us from despair. How generous, how good you must be!"

She was checked in her rhapsody by a rather confused air in the young man, who seemed to receive her address with the awkwardness of conscious overpraise. She stopped suddenly, afraid she had gone too far, and her blushes were reflected on the stranger's cheeks.

"You must not deceive yourself, Mademoiselle," said he, "or rather let me undeceive you—you owe me no thanks. The man who sells himself for money deserves no gratitude—I have had my price."

There was an uncouth tone in this speech, and in the manner of speaking it, that made Valerie start back. The young man followed her with his looks as she retreated towards her uncle and Lucien, and he seemed anxious to make his eyes atone for the abruptness of his tongue. Lucien disliked his manner of gazing after her;

and, endeavoring to compose his conflicting thoughts, he asked his father to explain the circumstances of this transaction. Mr. Larcourtelle replied briefly that the young man had consented to become a substitute for the conscription, after he had almost given up the hope of procuring one, on so short a notice, and for any thing approaching a reasonable recompense. Lucien was in the first instance almost overwhelmed with delight at the news of his escape; for in the anguish of parting from Valerie, he forgot for the time ambition, glory, vanity, self. But when he reflected, even for a moment; it was no more—a sudden pang shot through him, of mixed reproach, at thus shrinking from his duty, and of shame at suffering his father to buy him off; for he knew well that his means were very limited, and that the sum paid for a substitute must have been, under the circumstances, enormous. Man was at that epoch a merchandise of monstrous price. Following the course of his impetuous thoughts, Lucien's first impulse was to inquire the sum thus paid for his release, and to decide on refusing his liberty if it were to cost his father dear.

"Tell me, father," cried he, "tell me, I beseech you, what have you agreed to give?"

"No matter, no matter, my boy—you are free—the money is not worth a thought."

"Yes, yes, it is though, if you are to be the sufferer. Pray tell me the sum you are to pay."

"The matter is at an end, Lucien. Ask no more these trifling questions."

"From *you* then I must demand this information," exclaimed Lucien, haughtily turning to the stranger, "you will not refuse to name the sum paid to you?"

"Ten thousand francs," calmly answered he.

"Ten thousand!" repeated Lucien three or four times. "Impossible—ten thousand francs for *you*! Such a sum is ruinous to my father. Never can I consent to these terms. My dear father, how could you accede to them? And *you*, how could you expect to ask such an exorbitant sum?"

"Because less would not get my father out of goal."

A deep blush mantled on the cheeks of Lucien while this unhesitating answer seemed to convey a bitter reproach to the contrast his own conduct formed. He could not resist the unjust sentiment which rose up in his mind, of instantaneous dislike to the individual thus brought, as it were, into opposition with him. Turning abruptly to his father, he again exclaimed,—

"Father, I will not be a party in this ruinous proceeding. I know you cannot pay this sum, and I should therefore be only placing you in the position from which it appears this individual has relieved *his* father. Valerie, one more, one last farewell; I must not consent to this."

"It is too late, my dear boy," said Mr. Larcourtelle, deliberately, "the money is paid."

"That, my dear father cannot be—I know you possessed no such sum."

"I tell you, Lucien, it is all arranged. My old friend, Bonnard, the notary of Amiens, procured me the money. I have spent three days and nights in thoughts and efforts to complete the business, and thank Heaven it is done at last, and not too late! The money is paid."

"Yes, and my father free," said the stranger. "So nothing is now to be done but to let me depart with this worthy serjeant and these smart lads, my fellow-soldiers."

The serjeant, who had hitherto been a silent and somewhat impatient spectator, now stepped forward, and demanding from Mr. Lacourtelle more particular information on the subject of this exchange, received from the latter all the documents and authority which justified him in resigning his claim on Lucien and accepting the volunteer. He was evidently much dissatisfied at having lost the handsomest of his recruits, but he had no excuse of objection to the substitute, and no pretence for murmur from the regularity of the documents presented to him.

Valerie was an agitated but still an accurate observer of this scene. She knew Lucien well and minutely, and she read truly all the various movements of his legible mind; but though her main attention was given to them, she could not fail to observe the marked and remarkable bearing of the young stranger. She caught every one of the few words which had fallen from him, and there was something about him which irresistibly commanded her esteem. The motives of his self-sacrifice were alone sufficient to have secured it, and there was an unreasoning sentiment also at work, which influenced without convincing her, to honor and cherish the man who had been, even for his own purposes, the means of saving her lover. Anxious to throw the weight of her feelings into the scale where Lucien's fate seemed still balanced, she advanced towards him, and implored him to put no obstacles in the way of his father's and her happiness. She represented the money in question as so much dross, and so she thought it, for her young and frugal mind had never yet experienced the value of that *dross*. Lucien, in the rapid reckoning which he mentally ran over, endeavored to lessen to himself the importance of the sum for which his father was involved. He was not a profound calculator—the amount at first appeared immense—but he gave his father credit for prudence, and took as much to himself for industry—and thus satisfied himself that this great sacrifice might in some way or another be soon redeemed. The insinuating tenderness of Valerie threw a seductive veil across the galling feelings which rose up, in shame of his retiring from the station which his honor seemed to be pledged for his maintaining. He shut his eyes upon the prospect of his own dissatisfaction and the reproach of others; and he yielded, without further murmurs, to the arrangement which substituted the name of Isambert Duflos for his, in the serjeant's muster roll, was as it already in the official papers procured by Mr. Lacourtelle.

Nothing material now retarded the departure of the serjeant and his party. At Mr. Lacourtelle's invitation they entered the house, and some homely refreshments were produced and hastily partaken

of. The serjeant drank a half-bottle bumper of Burgundy to the health of the new recruit. The toast, with a warm wish for his happiness and safety, was pledged by Mr. Lacourtelles and the rest, Lucien himself not resisting the generous impulse, although he felt mortified in the conviction that all his pretensions to distinction were at the time eclipsed, by this self-devoted example of filial duty.

"And now, my good friend Isambert," said Mr. Lacourtelles, "I must complete my promise of equipping you for your march. Our hurry at starting from Amiens this morning left no time for arranging even a conscript's scanty wardrobe. Here, I see, is the knapsack meant for my son. Take it, just as it is, ready packed, and I dare say well filled, for it has been the work of Valerie, I'll warrant it: has it not, Valerie?"

"Yes, uncle, it has; and I am happy if my hands have contributed to the future comfort of this gentleman."

She blushed deeply as she spoke; Lucien was crimson to the eyes, but he turned away to conceal this appearance; and Isambert made a short and not ill worded acknowledgment of Valerie's kindness.

"Now for his cockade," said Mr. Lacourtelles. "He cannot march without this badge of service. Where is it?"

"Come then, Valerie," added her uncle, sew it quickly to that of Monsieur Dufos. He will not, as a gallant man and a brave soldier, value it the less, from being placed in his hat by the hand which is joined with a warm and friendly heart. Out with your needle quickly, niece—make haste."

In a minute or two the cockade was fastened firmly to the side of Isambert's hat, and as Valerie handed it to him, apologizing for its being moistened with her foolish tears, he pressed the ribbons to his lips, and with a full expression, in eyes which Valerie discovered to possess much meaning, he said,

"I shall indeed value this cockade and promise not to disgrace it. The tears which wet it makes it still more precious, and I may one day return it unsullied by any less sacred stain. I was before but a soldier from principle and duty—I am so now from sentiment and inclination. Adieu, Sir; farewell you, whose place I fill, and whom I shall endeavor not to dishonor by proxy—Mademoiselle, permit me, I entreat, the happiness of pressing my lips to your hand."

Valerie stretched forth her hand, timidly but not unpleasedly—for Isambert's words though she took them as mere phrases of courtesy, did not tingle disagreeably in her ears.

"Forward! March!" exclaimed the serjeant in a tone loud enough to have maneuvered a brigade. The drum answered the command—away went the gay and thoughtless youths, in straggling and irregular movement—shouting, singing, and flourishing their sticks. Isambert was the sole exception to this riotous departure. He went steadily forward, and seemed superior to those vulgar bursts of joy, or to its still more contemptible affectation.

The family group thus left behind stood for some time looking after the conscripts, as they traced their devious way across the fields towards the high road. Mr. Lacourtelles was the first to enter the

house; Valeria followed, to prepare for him some solid and comfortable refreshment; and Lucien felt his bosom heave and sink alternately, as he pondered on the situation he now filled, and pictured the chances he had resigned.

CHAPTER VI.

In the monotony of country life, with no extraordinary events to mark its progress, time steals our best days from us unperceived; and though he only flies at his accustomed rate, we fancy that he must have added new feathers to his wings. It may, then, be well believed that, to use the common parlance, several months "passed rapidly over" the heads of our heroine and her lover. With her they formed but one bright, cloudless day; each minute of which was spent in communings with her own heart, and an interchange between its sensations and those of *his*. Happy in the certainty of his being with her, grateful for the good fortune which preserved him to her, she sought for no drawbacks to delight in the past, nor picture its decrease in what was to come. Loving and beloved, the object of her passion constantly with her, this seeming sameness did not tire her. She felt no want of change, for the modulations of affection very without altering its chords.

Lucien's sensations were not so uniform nor so tame. Had they been so, he would not have been as happy as he was, for there was a stormy spirit in his mind that loved a more agitated atmosphere than this; and he had within him wherewith to create a fermentation even stronger than his temperament required. During the first months immediately following the events mentioned in the last chapter, he abandoned himself, with the forgetfulness of youth and love, to the indulgence of that passion which for awhile absorbed him. The soft delight which beamed from Valeria's looks, and spoke in all her tones, infected him with its delicious, yet enervating languor, and all his dreams of glory, and his vows of industry were alike forgotten. Neither the army nor the farm were thought of. His mind revelled in inactivity, with a slothful voluptuousness proportioned to its usual vigour, as the relaxation of a bow-string is proportioned to its former tension.

Mr. Laconrtelle observed his son's indolence without seeking for its cause. He was too happy in having him spared to him, to quarrel with his course of life. His parental feelings had experienced so strong an excitement that they overpowered all others for awhile; and he was determined not to disturb the tranquillity of Lucien's present career, lest he might disgust him with his situation altogether, and force him to the pursuits from which he had just saved him, but which he still believed him in secret to wish for.

At length concurrent causes came about to disturb this lethargy of love, and arouse the lover from that state of quiescent happiness, to be felt perhaps but once, and never to be described. The payment of the first instalments on Mr. Lacourtelle's debt came round, and Lucien knew too well how much inconvenience his father must be to provide for them, and felt too keenly how little *he* had contributed to the provision. The products of the property which they possessed were sufficient for the support of the family, in all the comfort suitable to their station in life; but at the year's end no surplus was laid by to meet any unlooked for exigencies. Mr. Lacourtelle, not expecting such, had not forethought sufficient to create a fund of the sort; and, in fact, until his son was drawn for the conscription, he had never experienced such a want. The consequences were to him most embarrassing. The ten thousand francs required for the substitute, on such short notice, were only to be raised by means of usurers; and their exactions, added to the charges of the friendly notary, made altogether a sum far exceeding the amount originally required. Bonds, bills, and mortgages were the consequent evils of the loan; and principal, interest, and cost, were all engaged for by the borrower to be paid at certain half yearly epochs, until the whole was cleared off, for which consummation the expiration of two years was the final limit.

When the first day of payment came, in six months after the debt was incurred, Mr. Lacourtelle found himself totally unable to meet his engagement. A delay was with some difficulty obtained; and accumulated interest and additional charges swelled out the original debt. It was at that moment that Lucien felt himself awakened from the trance in which he had been lulled, and poignant self-reproaches (for he met no others) assailed him: He could not conceal from himself that he had done nothing to assist his father in liquidating the debts created solely for him. He now swore to exert himself, and kept his vow. For six months more he labored hard, in the fields and in the farm-yard, at the neighboring fairs and markets; in every way, in short, in which an agriculturist or cattle-dealer could labor. His father was, as usual, intelligent and industrious—but every thing seemed to go wrong. The result was, that to meet the promised payments, stock was sold at a disadvantage, the harvest disposed of in expectancy and at undervalue, and the time to come deprived by anticipation of its profits. Sacrifices like these, sufficed to satisfy the gripping creditors, but it was but a respite from the quick recurring day of settlement. Lucien suffered all the perturbed anxieties of a sensitive and ardent mind. He was no longer what he had been to Valerie, nor did he feel her influence to be the same. He was often abstracted in his manner and peevish in his temper; angry with himself for suffering his thoughts to wander from this dearest object, and still more discontented when he suffered his spleen to vent itself on her. But he loved her probably the better for those little sallies of ill temper—and certainly did not love himself the less to find, that, be his bearing what it might, *she* loved him daily more and more.

Isambert Duflès had not been forgotten by any of the party he had left behind him: Mr. Lacourtelle sometimes thought of him with

pleasure, for he liked his manly straight-forward manners and conduct; and he could not help being a little vexed that this youth had not had not kept his promise of writing to him. Valerie, at times caught in her mind's eye the figure of Isambert as he made his parting bow, and she retained a perfect recollection of every word of his farewell speech. Whenever Lucien's mind reverted to this substitute of his, it was with any feeling but that of kindness—a gnawing, envious, jealous sensibility was always mixed with the recollection; and such is the unreasonableness of the human heart, that the more Lucien was convinced of its injustice, the stronger was his antipathy to this absent object of his self-created rivalry. Valerie, with the eagle eye of love, saw into the recesses of her lover's heart, and she abstained cautiously from all mention of the unwelcome name. Mr. Lacourtelle avoided every topic that might lead Lucien's thoughts back to the channel from which he hoped to turn them entirely—and thus Isambert, though thought of often, was scarcely, if ever, named, until one day, after dinner, Mr. Lacourtelle suddenly threw down the newspaper, which he regularly received and carefully perused, and exclaimed with thoughtless pleasure,

"I knew it—I knew it well! There was something in him which promised distinction, and he has gained it already."

He then read the passage which caused this exclamation. It was from one of the bulletins of the army in Spain, which, in detailing the particulars of one of those every day victories into which the French generally magnify each trifling or doubtful affair, contained the mention of some officers and soldiers who had distinguished themselves by their bravery. Among others it stated, that "the Conscript Isambert Duflos had displayed the valor and steadiness of a veteran, for which he was rewarded on the spot with the Cross of the Legion of Honor."

"I am glad of it, heartily glad of it!" cried Valerie, without any hesitation.

"And I, too, sincerely so," said Mr. Lacourtelle.

"I, then, am not!" exclaimed Lucien, with a fierce and almost furious expression of countenance. "He has robbed me of this—these honors should be mine. He stole into my place, and left me thus ingloriously and disgracefully to pine away my life, while he gains fame and fortune at my cost! Curse him, say I, and the evil hour in which he ever crossed my path!"

With these words he rose from his seat, and strode backwards and forwards in violent agitation. Mr. Lacourtelle and Valerie endeavored to quiet him for some time in vain. The former was astonished at this impulse of passion and almost hatred. Valerie felt no surprise but infinite regret at the intemperate display of feelings, which she knew to be in themselves unjust and in their avowal unwise. The whole scene lowered Lucien in her estimation, for she was not one of those lovesick maidens who shut their eyes upon their lover's faults, or converted them into virtues. She rather looked boldly on the weakness she could not but disapprove; but affection held the balance in which she weighed both merits and defects, and no wonder if the latter flew upwards!

Lucien felt himself to be wrong, but that conviction made him the more positive. His father expostulated against his injustice towards Isambert, but he only replied by vehement invectives against this unconscious disturber of his peace.

"Yes! he has robbed me of these chances, of which he now reaps the harvest. He had no right to steal into my place without my consent. What have you, my father, got by this, but embarrassment and loss? What have I acquired but self-reproach and misery?"

At these words, his angry glances came in contact with the mild and sorrowful expression of Valerie's eyes. There was no actual upbraiding in them, but they spoke remonstrance in its softest tone. Lucine felt the appeal; and bursting from one impetuous strain into another, he continued—

"I am going too far, I acknowledge it. I should not have said all this. I do hate this Isambert for his success, for the same he is acquiring, for the very good he has done me.—But I confess he has done me good. He has saved me to you, my dear father—and to my own sweet Valerie here"—and he was going on in a strain of that secret eloquence to which no third person should be a listener, when its blushing object felt herself called on to give him another, and a different kind of reproving glance, the influence of which he acknowledged, by an abrupt conclusion to his rapacity.

This scene made a deep impression on the whole party. They all discovered that Lucien's military passion was as active as ever, and they each lamented the discovery; Valerie and her uncle, from their distrust sensations towards him, and he himself from the too evident truth that he had but deceived himself into the belief of his passion for Valerie being the leading impulse of his mind. From that day an increasing feeling of disquiet broke in upon the minds of Lucien and his father; and it ruffled the calm surface of Valerie's delight, like the night breeze that creeps upon the smoothness of a summer lake.

It was soon after this time that an event occurred in the neighborhood of Flixecourt which promised to have a considerable influence on the fate of our hero and his friends; and was eventually, in no slight way, connected with it. This was the return of an emigrant family to their paternal mansion and the remnant of their property, after an exile of twenty years. When I say the return of a family, I should state that only one of the family returned. The rest, though considering themselves French, had never seen France before. Monsieur de Villeforte had fled from the first symptoms of the revolution, a young man, without any plea but personal safety for the abandonment of his country, thus left by him and others a prey to the evils which that abandonment was sure to bring upon it. He now returned advanced in life, with no reason for his return but that boast of the morbid patriotism so common and so sickening among men of his class. He had married in Germany, where his years of exile passed away, a wealthy and well born baroness; and he and his aristocratic spouse endeavored to instil into the minds of their son and two daughters as much of their own prejudices as they could spare, or the children receive. The young people, however, grew up (as is ordinarily the case with those whose teachers follow an overdone system,) the

exact opposites to their parents. The vagueness, the romance, the ambiguity of German feeling, was deeply engrafted upon the warmth and the levity of French sentiment; and the young man and two girls came into the country of their ancestors with the greatest contempt for the memory of their ancient race, and filled with false notions of freedom which never has existed, and of equality which never can exist, where both were talked of the most.

The Villefortes took possession of their empty and almost uninhabitable abode. The father and mother became unpopular the very first day on which their haughty and supercilious looks were visible to their scanty tenantry, and the other independent rustics who came to stare at the new comers. The cheerful and familiar countenances of the daughters, and the unaffected bearing of the son won for them, on the contrary, the instant good-will of the beholders. They all descended from their travelling carriage, a solid, heavy, German machine, loaded with imperials, trunks, and cases, with richly embossed mountings, and pannels proudly emblazoned with the family arms—a fortified castle, (rampant, I believe,) supporters two twenty-four pounders; crest, a hand grenade, rising from a *chevaux-de-frise*; motto I forget exactly what—but as appropriate as the rest, no doubt, to the hereditary power of the Villefortes. Besides the superior members of the family, contained inside, the external seats were filled with the chief domestics,—the *femme de chambre* a stiff untoilted spinster, the very antidote to French taste; the valet, a superannuated coxcomb, powdered and frizzed, with plenty of ruffles and a scarcity of shirt, a perfect epitome of the *ancien regime*; the coachman, round and rubicund; and the cook, well fed, sleek, and saucy. Besides these important members of the household, various inferior servants were bundled together in a species of *fourgeon* which followed close behind; and a variety of wagons, with baggage and provisions, and then a number of horses, dogs, &c., brought up the train.

This arrival was indeed an event in the retirement of Flixecourt; and the couriers who had preceded its approach, had given ample time for the curiosity of the village practically to display itself. The avenue leading up to the dilapidated mansion of the De Villefortes was consequently thickly lined, and the grass-grown court-yard, filled with the gaping witnesses of the spectacle. By mere accident, Lucien Lacourtelle made one of the crowd. He had been returning from a neighboring village, where business had detained him the greater part of the day, and as he passed by the Chateau de Villeforte, which was within half a league of his home, he was attracted by the bustle of expectation presented by the scene. He had heard of the looked-for return of the emigrant family, from the spoils of which his father's property had been realized. He had no sympathy with these new comers, but he felt a somewhat insolent throb of self-consequence in witnessing the return of these proud aristocrats to the partitioned scenes of their forefathers' greatness and tyranny. As the carriage drove up he gazed on it, undazzled by the display of feudal pride, and he felt a contemptuous sneer curl his lip as the travellers one by one descended from their seats.

Lucien stood upon the steps leading up to the principle entrance,

surrounded by a number of the villagers. He had a good view of the different personages as they came forward. Mr. de Villeforte, leading the Baroness, first approached, and he was evidently mortified and displeased at the uncourteous deportment of the bystanders, who all kept their heads covered, and did not utter a shout, although the almoner, and the maitre d'hotel, who had arrived some days before to see the house prepared, had used many inducements with the stubborn rustics, to make their voices belie their hearts on this occasion. The impression made by the father and mother was, as I said before, unfavorable. The son next appeared, a frank, good-tempered looking youth, smartly dressed, and smiling on those around him. He gave a hand to each of his sisters as they left the carriage, and he led them through the crowd and up the steps.

As soon as these young women appeared, a murmur of pleasure and admiration burst from the villagers. They were gaily and fashionably dressed, strikingly handsome, and their whole air and manner was condescending without appearing *patronizing*, and amiable without being overstrained. They bowed and smiled repeatedly to the salutations of those around them, and, as they came slowly up the steps, Lucien had a full view of them. It was hard, he thought, to say which of the two was the more handsome or pleasing; but one, evidently the eldest, particularly struck him, as possessing a peculiar air of what, if not exactly wildness, was something very like it. She had a bright and searching eye. She seemed to look for something or some one in the crowd, and an expression of adventurous inquiry beamed from her countenance, and gave to it, Lucien thought, a charm of infinite worth. As she came close, her glance seemed suddenly riveted upon him. She almost started when her eye first caught his: she blushed, and trembled, and laid hold of her sister's arm, whispered a few words to her, and they both stood still darting the most penetrating looks upon the object of their observation. Lucien had taken off his hat as they approached, and, with his flushed cheeks and curling locks, was certainly not an uninviting subject for the scrutiny of female eyes.

He was at first somewhat abashed, and felt awkward under this examination. But his native confidence soon rose to his relief, and he sent back the gaze of the chief examiner, with full as much determination as she put into her's. She, in her turn, seemed first confused, then pleased, and during the two minutes' interchange of looks which thus took place, an undoubted and extraordinary sympathy arose between the metaphysical young lady and the more material youth.

At length the peasants began to observe the scene. Its awkwardness was felt by the chief actors. The brother urged his sisters towards the house; Lucien involuntarily stepped back; and the young ladies entered the mansion, the eldest throwing one parting glance, into which she seemed to fling her whole soul at Lucien, and exclaiming, to her sister, in a half whisper, but loud enough for him to hear,

"Yes! 'tis he—'tis he! What an extraordinary destiny!"

Lucien stood for a moment quite bewildered. The words he heard, and the tone in which they were uttered, seemed the results of some magic combination. The looks of the lovely utterer had inspiration in

him. *He* was clearly the object that had excited all this. He experienced an extraordinary rush of sensations, utterly new. He seemed no longer the being of his own will ; but felt, or fancied he felt himself the agent of some unknown and irresistible fate. He slowly quitted the crowd, and reached home, as it were, mechanically, for he remembered nothing, on arriving at the door, of any one of the thoughts or intentions which occupied him on the way.

CHAPTER VII.

Perplexing and unfathomable as this state of feeling appeared to my hero, I do not mean that it should long remain so to my readers. The fact was, that Henriette and Victorine de Villeforte had entered France, filled with feelings of the most romantic extravagance, and determined to find adventures on every possible occasion. The first arrival at the home of their ancestors was an event not to be passed over without one of these adventures ; and, in pursuance of this conviction, Henriette, the eldest, resolved to dream a dream. She did so accordingly, whether sleeping or walking I know not ; but as was fitting, and right and proper on the occasion, she saw, in the shadows of vision, the face and form of the youth who was destined to be, for ever and a day, her kindred spirit, her associate body, her torture and delight, her sunshine and her gloom, her bane and antidote—and all other sorts of things suited to the lover of a would-be heroine of a patent romance. Resolved not to have all the trouble of this dream for nothing, she was bent on the discovery of the living image of this visioned face and form ; and she, as a matter of course, communicated this revelation of fate to Victorine, on the special condition that she was to be *but* confidante, and on no account to presume to fall in love with her sister's already bespoken lover.

The day of arrival at the Chateau de Villeforte was looked for, hoped for, and dreaded, in due form, and with a fitting proportion of palpitations and presentiments. Every new post-boy that clambered up the sides of the post-horses at each new stage—every chance gamekeeper that lounged across the road—every straggling courier that galloped towards her, was gazed at by Henriette with the shivering incertitude proper to be experienced on so nervous an occasion. But the unprepossessing looks of these vulgar individuals gave the lie to the expectation that any one of them was *her* hero in disguise. At length the carriage reached the chateau-gates, and Henriette's fidgetty pulsations beat higher and higher as she saw the throng assembled in the avenue and courtyard. The carriage went slowly on, and her eager eyes darted out of all the windows at once ; but no face of beauty, no form of grace presented itself. Henriette thought she had never seen such a clumsy, clod-hopping assemblage of ill-looking beings. In fact, the Picardy peasants

were not a well favored race, and the conscription had taken away almost every youth of the province. Henriette was on the verge of despair. Can it be possible, thought she at last, that some juggling fiend has been paltering with me in a double sense? or words to that effect—for she had not read Shakspeare. But she had read enough of German trash, bombastic caricatures on his sublimity, to have inventions in plenty at hand on an occasion like this; and she forthwith fervently prayed to be immeasurably plunge into the depth of a charnel vault, frozen up for ever in an iceberg, or engorged to perpetuity in the horrors of some wolf's glen, rather than not realize the brilliant destiny that had been promised her. This was her last prayer as she quitted the carriage, and it imparted to her eyes that impassioned extravagance which Lucien remarked when he saw her looking so wildly, but little imagining that she was looking for him. But so, however, it was; or, at least, turned out to be. Henriette saw that she had no time to lose, and she was resolved that the charm should be complete—the spell confirmed. She had thus, as she reached the top step in utter desperation, fixed her eyes on a gipping, white-haired, rosy-cheeked lout, the only look-at-able thing she had seen; and she began ranning over in her mind the features of her dream, and convincing herself they were the prototype of *these*—when the glowing beauty of Lucien's face, and the careless grace of his figure, in a happy moment caught her eye. The result of this discovery my readers know already. In a raptured whisper she told her sister she had at last found him; and though she acknowledged the eyes and hair to be of a different color, and some of the features not the same as those she had so often described to Victorine as belonging to "the revealed one," yet she satisfied herself that she had seen him through some visioned prism, and that this, his flesh-and-blood representative, was the real, downright, destined object, who was to be her's for ever and ever. So much for the self-made heroine! and now for my hero, whom she was so desirous to have for *her's*.

Poor Lucien thought himself certainly bewitched. But there was, after all, no sorcery employed to make him lose his heard. He had seen these fine blue beaming eyes fixed upon him, had heard the words which alluded to him and destiny together, and he thought he must be a charmed man. And so, in truth, he was—but merely by the natural spell of his own vanity, which told him, in an instant, that this fair charmer of his was over head and ears in love with him. That was quite enough to set him beside himself, to make him forget all the rest of the world, and to convince him he was acted on by fate, as a person prepares himself for animal magnetism, by believing in the operator, or persuades himself he *ought* to be a poet or a painter, because a phrenologist finds a certain bump upon his skull.

The evening of this momentous day was one of perfect abstraction on the part of our hero; and while his father and Valerie pitied the keeness of what they supposed his suffering at the accumulating difficulties of the family, he was as free from care as they might have been of compassion. *Something* told Lucien that he should hear more of the witching Henriette, whose name he had made himself master of, and that flattering whisperer, so often false, did not on this occasion tell a

lie. The very next morning a very civil message was brought from the chateau, by a footman, that the young ladies accompanied by their brother, meant to have the pleasure of paying a visit that day to Mademoiselle Valerie, and the Messieurs Lacourtelle, father and son.

This message was tormenting to Mr. Lacourtelle, starting to Valerie, and electrifying to Lucien. The promised visit assorted ill with the anxious state of the father's mind, or with the revolutionary contempt and dislike which he cherished towards the emigrants; and, to avoid it, he left the house, and occupied himself in the most distant part of the farm. Valerie busied herself, with her natural promptitude and good taste, to make homely, but hospitable preparations for the expected guests; and Lucien flew to his toilette, and decked himself out, in the manner most becoming to the occasion—and to himself. Thus prepared he looked most strikingly handsome, and Valerie felt so proud of him that she longed almost as much as he did for the arrival of the visitors.

They at length arrived. Valerie had too much of native good sense, and was sufficiently like the generality of her countrywomen, to feel any great alarm or evince any extraordinary shyness at the visit of two fine ladies and their attendant fine gentlemen. The revolution had destroyed the feeling which attached notions of awe to the very name of greatness; and men and women in France, as they ought elsewhere, knew the proper limits which should mark their respect for rank and wealth. For that due to wisdom and virtue there should be no bounds. But even if Valerie had labored under the senseless dread which was formerly inspired by the very name of nobility, the manners of its representatives, who now visited her, would at once have put her at ease. The frank and unaffected air of Camille de Villefort, and the easy and winning manners of his sisters, won Valerie's heart. Henriette in particular was perfectly delightful—but Valerie did not all at once perceive that it was because she was in love. Lucien, however, whose observation was sharpened upon the keen edge of personal vanity, saw through the cause at a glance; and he perceived that Henriette was pleasing, chiefly because she wished to be so. An hour sufficed to make the whole party familiarly acquainted, if not exactly intimate friends; and Henriette insisted that they should go in search of Mr. Lacourtelle, in order to make him one in the bond of union in which she meant to be joined with the whole family.

"Ah, yes, my dear Valerie," said she, as they passed through the little garden hand in hand "Yes, there is such a thing as pure friendship, ethereal sympathy, and this is it! I panted, sighed for this. *Something* told me I should find friends here, in these our old paternal fields—and I have found them."

The more than tender look, sent full into Lucien's face with the concluding words of this speech, gave Valerie a turn, she could scarcely say of what kind. She had been pleased highly with the courtesy and graciousness of Henriette's manner, and she was almost disposed to receive, with the same readiness with which it was offered, the abrupt intimacy so warmly proposed to her. But this overflowing declaration of friendship at first sight (a thing as impossible

as love at first sight is natural) filled Valerie's mind with a doubt and a dread that she could not repel; and she felt herself change colour two or three times, during the short pause that intervened between Henriette's speech and Lucien's reply.

"Why don't you answer, Valerie?" asked he; but quickly turning to Henriette, he continued, "let me speak for her, she is overpowered by your kindness. But she does not feel the less, I vouch for it, the warm glow of those divine sentiments which you inspire—that exquisite sympathy which I trembled with the moment I first gazed on you."

"My dear, dear friend!" cried Henriette, taking Lucien's hand, and looking a thousand meanings full in his face. He pressed the tips of her delicate fingers to his lips as if his sensibility was afraid of venturing a more substantial embrace.

"Yes, yes!" continued she, "this is happiness—this balmily morning—these verdant fields—these heavenly sensations! Yes, yes, the destiny which was revealed to me in slumber was not a deception—I feel that there is a secret link, a mysterious bond which binds us to each other—a still deep voice which whispers that we belong to each other for ever!"

"The devil we do!" said Lucien to himself, or some inward interjection of like meaning; for he was utterly electrified by Henriette's speech. He had no notion whatever that matters were going so fast, or so far. His brain had been turned round and round, by all that had been passing, but only one word was wanting to bring him to his senses; and Henriette had furnished a whole sentence. He stood for a moment astonished, and somewhat ashamed of himself, while she pressed his insensible hand between hers, and gazed on him with a melting expression in her full orb'd eyes. But his were mechanically turned towards Valerie, and were at once riveted on the sad and almost terrified expression of her countenance. In an instant the confusion of Lucien's head and heart was at an end. Ideas and sentiments recovered their own proper places; and as soon as they did so, words, their audible representatives, came glibly enough to our hero's command. He could have spoken, he thought, any thing at the moment—but the first thing that pressed for utterance was some reassuring expression to his beloved Valerie. Prudence, however, stood sentinel at his lips, and repulsed the imprisoned speech that would have rushed beyond them. But it sought another mode of communication, and the very words he would have spoken, filled his eyes with a meaning as legible as a written scroll. A lightning glance from those of Valerie sent back a full reply; and they both stood as satisfied of each other's sentiments as though an hour of speech had amplified their condensed but eloquent expression.

This was a crisis as positive as a medical man could require in any case of moral or physical derangement. Henriette stood as still as though Comus had touched her with his wand. Her brother and sister, who knew her ways, and were a good deal infected with her weakness, remained silent witnesses of the scene. Lucien's and Valerie's occupations I have already stated—and while the whole group stood thus immovable and speechless, Mr. Lacourteille stepped

through a gap in the hedge close by. His mind was amply filled with the consideration of his embarrassments, and he had forgotten the promised visit from the young de Villefortes. He started, therefore, in surprise, and that expression was changed to a look of displeasure, as he thought that this silent convention was purposely lying in wait to entrap him into an interview. Lucien stepped towards him, and announced the names of the strangers; but the rough and independent manners of the father were not softened by the son's insinuating tone, and he asked with unusual harshness.

"Well, and what do they do here? I have no business with them, nor they with me. If you and your cousin choose to receive their visits, do so; entertain them as you like, but let me be freed from this intrusion."

And he was turning abruptly away, when Henriette stepped forward, her face still beaming in the glow of the energetic feelings she had just expressed to Lucien. She made a most graceful salutation to Mr. Lacourtelle, and with a voice of respectful softness and words of soothing gentleness she expressed, on behalf of herself and all her family, the pleasure they felt in the prospect of a frequent and intimate intercourse with him and his. There was an irresistible charm in Henriette, when she confined herself within the bounds of rational demeanor. It was only in her flights of romance that she wounded sense by her exaggerations of sensibility. Mr. Lacourtelle thought her quite bewitching, and he no longer opposed a surly incivility to the advances so condescendingly made. He replied in kind and civil terms; and the brother and sister followed up Henriette's overtures by some well turned and courtly compliments, the natural language of good breeding, and which even churlishness itself can seldom withstand. Mr. Lacourtelle immediately became one of the party, returned with the others to the house, and joined Valerie and Lucien in the escort which they gave to their new friends on part of their way to the chateau.

Mr. Lacourtelle was a shrewd man, still young enough not to overlook the manners of younger people, and he was not slow in observing in those of Henriette, her decided admiration of his son. In the actual state of his affairs, such a symptom was of too much importance to be merely observed and then forgotten. He treasured up his remarks; and a new train of thought was opened to him, in the matrimonial associations which presented themselves to his mind, and in the fair chance, thus possibly within his reach of securing, by good management, his own relief from present embarrassments, and Lucien's ultimate elevation in the world, with his exemption from the military life, which was to the fond father the worst of evils.

Every encouragement was given by Mr. Lacourtelle to this new intimacy, so auspiciously begun. He talked incessantly for several days in praise of Henriette, and spoke in such terms of her beauty, her manners, and her evident fancy for Lucien, as made him at times again and again almost beside himself with gratified vanity, until a glance at poor Valerie's speaking countenance once more recalled him to himself and to her. Still the visiting went on. Not a day

passed without Henriette's appearance at Mr. Lacourtelles; a card from Mr. de Villefort was left by a footman at his door; and Valerie's heart and Lucien's head were in a perpetual state of perturbation, in spite of their reciprocal efforts to keep each other calm and steady. But though Henriette hurried on by this *impulse* of hers, was resolved to give destiny no loop-hole to escape from the result to which she held it pledged, there was nothing in her conduct or manners unbecoming the bearing of a modest and right thinking enthusiast. She went too far, as we have seen, in her words, and perhaps her looks gave them, even, a too strong emphasis. But her thoughts had nothing impure in them; her feelings were generous and warm; and it was evident to all who knew her, that were her extravagance tempered down by experience, she possessed many of the elements of a fine character. She was under twenty years of age, and her sister and brother, who in a great measure took their tone from her more marked peculiarities, were still younger than she. They accompanied her visits, which were ostensibly made to Valerie, but virtually designed for Lucien; and they served merely to fill up the interstices left in the main action by the occasional lassitude of their over-excited sister.

But although this new connection gave a respite to the feelings of pecuniary annoyance which had been pressing so hard on Mr. Lacourtelles and his son, it by no means (but in the expectancy of the former,) removed the cause from which they arose. Month after month had been passing over with all Mr. Lacourtelles's pledges of payment unredeemed, and disappointments, excuses, and importunities had followed the course usual on these occasions, until at length the latest day of settlement came fast approaching, for the two years had but a small portion of their extent to run. Several plans of relief were debated between father and son; and it was at length resolved, that the latter should go once more to Amiens, where he had been frequently before dispatched, to make another effort to gain time from the *friendly* notary, (who had at length thrown off the mask and shown the native deformity of extortion)—and if that failed, he was to propose, as a last resort, that a small portion of the property was to be actually sold to satisfy the claims of this man, and the brood of kindred harpies whom he represented. Bitter were the feelings with which this sacrifice was at length determined on by Mr. Lacourtelles, but those of Lucien were infinitely more acute.

The appearance of a letter had been for some time past a painful sight to both, for scarcely any had lately arrived that did not contain a reproach, an insult, or a threat. The very morning fixed for Lucien's visit to the notary brought one of those arrivals, so long looked on with loathing. The letter lay for some time on the breakfast table before Mr. Lacourtelles would break the seal or look at the superscription. At length he took it up. He saw that it was not directed in any of the well known hated writings, but that a strange hand, and foreign appearance marked the epistle to be from a less familiar, and more distant correspondent. He broke the seal, looked at the name at foot, found it to be that of Isambert Duflos; and he immediately began to read the letter aloud, forgetful for the moment,

of the annoyance formerly excited in Lucien by a less direct communication from the writer. The letter was brief, friendly, and communicative. It told of Isambert's success, with the firmness and modesty combined with which a man should view and speak of his own merits. Isambert was superior to the affectation of concealing the results which good conduct alone could have gained him. He told of prize money acquired and of promotion promised, and he concluded by cordial expressions of good will towards each member of a family for which he ventured to express a more than common interest.

Lucien did not on this occasion allow of any out-bursting of his feeling; even if they arose in their former violence; but leaving all comment on Isambert's letter to his father and Valerie, he embraced them both, mounted his horse, and set off with a full heart on his almost hopeless mission.

CHAPTER VIII.

Lucien proceeded on his journey of a few miles, with feelings of intense suffering, and of as serious a nature as are commonly endured by men leaving their homes on voyages of hundreds of leagues. His sensations were of a mixed and agitating kind, with scarcely one of solace or satisfaction. This letter of Isambert aroused, once more, all those dormant feelings of ambition which less noble excitements had obscured; and the pang with which he contemplated the rapid success of this youth, in the path of reputation and riches, was aggravated by all those harassing emotions which had been so long preying upon him. The two years of stipulated credit had expired. This very day completed the term; and he was now proceeding on that most painful of services to a high-minded man—the request for indulgence from a harsh creditor; and there are few indeed, who, being creditors at all, can resist the ungracious temptation of showing to their debtors that they have at least *the power* to be harsh and humiliating. And, added to all these sources of pre-existing inquiet, Lucien had now full opportunity of reviewing his late state of feeling with respect to Henriette de Villefort, and the consequences emanating from it, relative to Valerie. He was deeply dissatisfied with himself. He could not blind himself to the display of weakness and vanity which his secret emotions had betrayed; he saw that the blandishments of beauty, rank, and flattery had acted on him as the wind upon a weathercock; and he felt himself to have been kept steady in his fidelity to the sweet girl to whom he had over and over sworn it, but by the attraction of her decorous grace, and its visible contrast with the ardent impetuosity of her who had, even for a day, seduced him from his allegiance. He

had, it was true, recovered from that lapse of faith ; but he felt it to be the power of Valerie's charms, not his own innate loyalty, that saved him ; and even at the moment of this self-accusing, he could not be insensible to the intoxicating delight, with which his memory reverted to Henriette's manifest admiration ; and at the very instant that his mind beamed brightest in the consciousness of Valerie's love, this spurious thought came across it, as a meteor glares in the sky that is luminous with moonlight purity.

Thus agitated, dissatisfied, and almost desponding, Lucien reached Amiens, and prepared for his visit to the notary. But he required a considerable delay before he could quite bring his mind into proper tone to meet the combination of trickery and impertinence, which from former visits to the same person he knew he had to expect. The day was waning fast ; he had eaten his solitary dinner at a comfortless inn ; had sauntered for some hours on the public walk, called l'Autoy, close to the river Somme ; had paced for the hundredth time the aisles of the cathedral ; and the sun of a soft evening in spring, was sinking quietly to rest behind the shelter of the rising grounds westward of Amiens, when Lucien at length determined to repair to the house of the notary, and turned into the narrow street where it stood. He approached the well remembered and open door of the shabby little mansion ; and advancing half way into the passage, he pulled the greasy bell-cord which hung beside the wicket, that prevented a nearer approach to the legal sanctuary where the notary sat enshrined, the high priest of chicanery. An old woman servant answered Lucien's call, and replied to his inquiries, that Mr. Bonnard was in his study ; and she forthwith admitted him, opened the study door, and announced his name.

But the tone of her feeble voice made no impression on the closed up tympanum of the notary's ear. He was fast asleep in his elbow chair by the chimney side ; and Lucien stood for a few seconds in the middle of the little closet-like chamber, before he knew for certain that Mr. Bonnard was not awake.

He had all the appearance of waking life, he sat stooping forwards, as was his custom, towards the table before him, his pen was held mechanically between his fingers and thumb—his spectacles were balanced loosely on his nose—his black cap covered his head—and his flowered silk dressing gown displayed its usual arrangement of folds. Mr. Bonnard had a habit, common to many men of business in France and elsewhere, of leaving a person for some seconds standing, without taking any notice of them, possibly from fear of interrupting the chain of their own thoughts, *probably* from a notion that they give themselves importance by this apparent abstraction and certain incivility. Lucien knew this habit of the old notary, and he was therefore not sure that he slept, until an audible evidence or two spoke to the fact from the witness box of the notary's proboscis. He snored most refreshingly, and Lucien stood looking at him as he snored. Age and cunning had shrivelled his cheeks, and wrinkled his brow, and given a peculiar compression to his features, visible even in sleep—and perhaps since that day in death. The tell-tale expression of the little grey eyes was lost to our observer, but his

memory raised the lids that covered their piercing and dissembling glances.

The room contained the usual mixed display of professional and provincial littleness and greatness, which is to be seen in the office of a country practitioner. A mahogany book case showed within its glass door many volumes of well bound works on law, and some on equity, the latter of which contained no attraction for the touch of the old notary. Some loose shelves, from which hung draperies of green stuff, were also loaded with the labors of those who poured the blaze of their literary and legal lights to keep the world in the dark. Some portraits of dead judges, on whom in their turn the public had passed sentence, hung against the walls, a posthumous and unpremeditated indication of their deserts; and one or two pictures of legal punishments, the pillory and the galleys, filled the vacant spaces, mementos as fitting to the place and to its occupant, as paintings of limbo and purgatory, to the confessional of a jesuit. Several square pasteboard boxes decorated the shelves fixed round the room, marked with the names of various clients, whose hopes and happiness had many a *lien* upon them within. The table at which Bonnard sat, was thickly covered with bundles of papers tied up and labelled; account books and pamphlets; some loose sheets newly copied; and one lying close under his pen, which had been just tracing in a cramped and crabbed hand, lines that Lucien thought likely to be the death-warrant to some family's peace: He stood for a while fixed to the spot, in silent observation of the scene thus sketched, and of the old sinner who formed its illustration. A long train of reflections passed rapidly through our hero's brain. He saw before him, and he mused and moralized upon the sight, a hoary extortioner, whose griping hands had strangled the hopes of many a confiding novice, and picked the pockets of many an easy dupe. "There," thought Lucien, "sits in death's mimicry, the very man whose false friendship has led my father and myself into years of distress and discomfort—the ready instrument of ruin to every unfortunate, who, sinking in the waves of want, catches at the rottenest reed that promises relief. What an infected atmosphere I breathe in! How this den of infamy is filled with the foul odors of roguery and baseness! Surely when this old man quits the world, this house will smell strong of brimstone! I am sick of being here. I seem to form one in the firm of villany, of which that shriveled wretch has never till now been a sleeping partner. Am I indeed then joined with him, even in temporary communion? Perhaps Providence has thrown me into this fellowship for some good end. Let's see—what papers are those?"

Thus thinking, Lucien approached on tiptoe towards the table. Curiosity was not exactly the propelling motive. A concealed impulse of individual benefit, an instinct of self-interest was working within him. He thought, without reflecting on it, that the proofs of his father's debt, the instruments that worked his distress might be at the moment within his grasp. He advanced, he touched the table lightly with one hand, sent strained glances among the papers scattered round, held in his breath, threw a piercing look across the room

to see that no one lurked. "Perhaps," thought he, "the devil is really here; watching the prey he has secured, and prowling for more!" He paused a moment, shocked by the thought, but the temptation, or possibly "the tempter," was too strong. He eagerly looked over the papers, held his ear close to the sleeping notary, scrutinized, at once, the old deceiver's visage, and his records—and he saw, while his heart seemed bounding in his throat, the bonds, bills, mortgages, writs, and judgments, which seemed heaped together to crush his father to the earth.

It was no time for half measures. He had gone too far to recede. Desperation seemed to swell his pulse, to steady his hand, and stifle his conscience. He hesitated no more; but with cautious touch he selected all the papers connected with his father's case, put them carefully into the breast of his coat, and buttoning that close up to his throat, he stole gently across the floor. He threw one keen glance at the old man, and assured himself that he still slept. "All's safe! Thank Heaven"—or, God forgive me! I know not which to say," inwardly muttered he; and softly opening the door, he went out on tiptoe into the passage, crept slowly on, fearful of attracting the old woman's attention, reached the wicket, raised the latch, passed this last barrier, gently closed it again, and in a moment more was standing in the street.

But the very moment he reached the open air, no sooner had he escaped from the atmosphere of sin which was behind him, than his conscience awoke, and smote him with a giant's strength. "What have I done!" exclaimed he, shudderingly, "What deed of felony have I effected! Valerie, Valerie, what would'st thou say to this! No no, this must not be. Exemption even from ruin must not be purchased at this price! Let me hurry back, ere the hoary villain awakes."

With thoughts like these, almost audible, and feeling as if every artery of his body had thrown their fountains into his glowing face, he retraced his way. But he no longer stepped like a skulking felon. He trod the passage with a firm foot, as suited an honest and honorable man. Knowing the way of opening, and having no ceremonious announcement to send forward, he raised the wicket latch, and steadily opening the door, he was once again in the middle of the notary's room. Be the influence what it might, he was no sooner there than he hulf repented his return, and for an instant was again tempted to keep fast his booty and escape! But his better feelings prevailed. He stood close to the table, the dusky shade of evening came through the single window into the dim chamber, and left Lucien's face and figure half in gloom. The notary fronted the window, and as he looked musty and shrivelled, like one of his own iniquitous parchments, Lucien could not resist the inclination, prompted by his fermenting blood, at least to give a fright to his father's persecutor. Instead, therefore, of replacing the securities, as she had just intended, he held them closely in his bosom; and in a hallow voice he called the notary by his name.

"Who calls, who calls me?" stammered Bonnard, starting half up in his chair.

"Your old friend," deeply murmured Lucien.

"Who? What? God preserve me, who are you?" tremblingly

cried the notary, while in his efforts to distinguish Lucien's half revealed figure he let fall his spectacles, and recovering them, had nearly upset the table.

"What, don't you know me?" said Lucien, in the same voice.

"Saints and Angels save me!" exclaimed the old man, sinking on his knees, and putting up his hands in the attitude of prayer.

"What, you *don't* know me!" muttered his tormentor, in his own natural voice. "Who did you take me for? The devil?" and he could not resist bursting into a loud fit of laughter.

"Who are you?" said Bonnard, jumping up on his feet, "Is it possible?—are you—"

"Yes, to be sure I am," said Lucien, advancing, "your old friend's son, Lucien Lacourtelle. Is it possible you don't really recollect me.

"What, who? Lacourtelle? Oh God! where are my spectacles? The bonds, the mortgages, the judgments! where are they? where are they? I'm undone, I'm lost forever!"

While he uttered these broken exclamations, he grouped about in vain for the important documents, seemingly forgetful of Lucien's presence, yet instinctively suspecting him of the roguery which, in his situation, he would have surely practised, and not repented of.

"Come, come, Mr. Bonnard, do not, I pray you, ruffle yourself so much about a trifle, what have you lost?"

"What have I lost? what is at this moment of the utmost importance to me."

"Only your character, I hope," continued Lucien, laughing, "for you can easily find a better, you know."

"Mr. Lucien Lacourtelle, what do you dare to say to me?" cried the notary, fiercely looking upon his visitor; but forgetting his insulted reputation for what he valued much dearer, his threatened interest, he turned once more in great agitation to the table, and recommenced his useless search.

The old rogue's perturbation gave Lucien more time for thought. He saw himself the possessor of the whole of these important papers. He little doubted their containing ample evidence of Bonnard's exactions and chentery. He did not scruple to make a fair advantage of what he possessed; and such he considered insisting upon the terms of *indulgence* for his father, and a requirement of all the surcharges on the original debt, with legal interest to the day of payment. He felt that he had the power, no matter how acquired, to procure these conditions, and he was resolved to use it. I must here beg of the reader to recollect that I am only stating facts, not defending opinions, and leaving him to draw his own inferences and moral.

After some minutes hopeless scrutiny, the poor notary gave his documents up as lost, and himself also, and he sunk into his chair in a state of almost childish exhaustion. He bitterly bewailed his fate, and only expressed a hope that, as Lucien must certainly have robbed him, he did not mean to murder him too. There is always something in sorrow, be the sufferer ever so worthless and abject, that moves the pity of a generous mind. Lucien could not, therefore help feeling compassion for his unworthy victim, although he was angry with himself for his weakness. He drew a chair close to the notary's and sitting down beside him, he said,

"Well, well, Mr. Bonnard, he composed and comforted. I am not going to murder you, nor have I exactly robbed you ; but I confess I have all the deeds and papers which are connected with your iniquitous treatment of my father."

"What, all?"—*All* the papers, the calculations of interest, the private agreement with the lenders of the money—the *private* agreement?"

"Aye, every one of them—all I tell you," exclaimed Lucien, in a firm tone, and he hoped as firmly as he spoke, that he *had* all.

"Then I am utterly destroyed!" cried the notary, "that is to say, if your object be my destruction. But could we not accommodate this matter, my dear Mr. Lacourtelle? Could we not come to some compromise? Recollect your worthy father is one of my oldest friends—remember our long attachment."

All that Lucien wanted was a compromise, and he smothered his rising resentment at the effrontery of the wretch who invoked the shade of the friendship he had murdered.

"Well, well," said he, "I do not wish to ruin you quite, and I may perhaps consent to compromise this affair. Call for some supper and a bottle of your good old Burgundy, and let's see if we can't arrange matters amicably."

The notary felt like a criminal reprieved. He called his housekeeper, ordered an omelette, a fricassee, and a bottle of his best wine ; and with a couple of fresh faggots on the hearth, and a couple of cheerful bumpers before them, he and Lucien set to work to examine the papers and make out the conditions of the new treaty. Although Lucien was no lawyer, the last two years' experience had taught him something of law. He did not want clear-sightedness in a plain case of either honesty or fraud, and he could see that the latter was the leading feature in all the transactions which he had now to examine. Several hours passed over ere he had quite unravelled the web ; but he was resolved to do his business completely, and he did not quit his chair, nor suffer Bonnard to stir, until a regular agreement was made out by the latter, and signed with his own seal of office, by which he renounced all claims upon Mr. Lacourtelle for a larger sum than six thousand francs, thus reducing his dishonest demands full one half ; and he granted him clear twelve months to pay the money. This done, Lucien returned the original bond to Bonnard, and deliberately thrust the other papers, one by one, into the fire, thus fulfilling that part of the compact which freed the roguish notary from all fear of prosecution, on the score of his usurious exactions and the illegal private agreement before alluded to, but which Lucien did not exactly understand till some time afterwards.

This consummation effected, both parties felt relieved of a weight of uneasiness. Lucien had nothing to regret ; but mixed with Bonnard's self-gratulations was the deep and painful reflection, that he had lost by that night's work the fruits of two years wickedness. Lucien was preparing to take his leave, but he saw evidently that the notary labored with some secret proposition, and he only delayed its utterance, until he had concocted the terms into which it might best be put. Lucien's impatience to know if any thing still lurked unsifted or unexplained, induced him at once to bring the notary to the point, and he accordingly begged of him to unburthen himself

of any matter, the disclosure of which might be to the interests of either. Thus pressed, Bonnard requested Lucien to draw his chair closer to the fire, and being so situated, the old man proceeded to speak, with a peculiarly knowing and significant expression on his wily face.

"Why, as matters have gone so far between us, Mr. Lucien Larcourtelie, it cannot be denied that, after this night's transactions, our mutual interests make a speedy payment of all accounts between your father and myself desirable, and that in common justice you must be anxious to get rid of my claim."

"Ay, of all connection with you certainly," interrupted Lucien.

"Nay, nay, don't be impatient; nor is there any need of foul words, Mr. Larcourtelie; but as you have violated all the rights of domestic security——"

"Foul words, you old slanderer! what do you call this?"

"Never mind, never mind, you are so impetuous—I was only stating my case—it's my way—you must let me have my way—particularly as it leads to your own great advantage, Mr. Larcourtelie. Ha, ha, ha! that is the manner of putting an argument, isn't it, young man?"

"Go on, go on—take your own way, and come to the point."

"Well, then, as you have by violence—nay, nay, don't interrupt me—by stratagem, then, if you like the word better—you having by treachery—stratagem, I mean, forced me to relinquish claims to the amount of several thousand francs, you would in bare justice wish me to be paid what you acknowledge to be due, as soon as was convenient with your circumstances."

"Granted."

"You know that had you served as a soldier when drawn, the debt would not have existed?"

"What next, Sir?"

"Very well! Now you know, this debt, in fact and justice, is yours, not your father's?"

"Well, Sir—Go on!"

"It is hard, you must confess, that he should be distressed for the payment?"

"Proceed, proceed."

"And you disgraced by his suffering?"

"I can bear this no longer," cried Lucien starting up and striking his hand against the table, "you work me into a fever. What is your object? What are you driving at? Nothing could move me but this. I am proud of the violence of which you accuse me—I glory in having been the means of punishing your vile extortions—your reproaches have no sting on that score. But when you remind me of my father's sufferings on my account, of my own indelible disgrace, you pay me back the pain I have cost you, and you put me beside myself. I will not endure this. If you have any plan—any *scheme*, let me say, to be more intelligible to your mind and your habits—communicate it. Tell me how I can wipe out this infamous debt—by what self-infliction—by what sacrifice?——"

"By no infliction—by no sacrifice! But merely by making happy

a lovely girl who adores you, who admires your manly character and fine person, whom these brilliant eyes of yours have played the very deuce with, Mr. Lincourt-He. Aha! I have made you smile, have I? to have almost with a look, gained the heart of one of the loveliest girls in France, who will by and by possess an independent fortune of two hundred and fifty thousand francs."

"I was not aware that I smiled—but you have spoken laughingly, Mr. Bonnard. Out with your secret—it is but half revealed. What is the lady's name?"

"Henriette de Villeforte, you rogue—did not your heart tell it you?"

Lucien's heart had anticipated the notary's avowal, and it throbbed wildly at the mention. A thousand thoughts flitted across his brain. How could the notary have known her feelings—how speak so positively of them? An independent fortune of two hundred and fifty thousand francs! What a splendid possession! what honors might he not attain! Such were a few of the leading thoughts that crowded on him.

"Yes, yes," continued Bonnard, "you know it all—every one knows it—she only waits for your proposal—she expects it—in fact, she is yours for asking. The deeds of her fortune are in that box."

"Mr. Bonnard, you must excuse my abruptness," exclaimed Lucien, "and I must leave you. I confess you have stirred up a world of feelings within me. I must have time for reflection. Good night! I shall probably see you again on this subject—but I am not certain. You are *sure* of what you say?"

"All of it—every word. The deeds are there!"

"Good night, good Mr. Bonnard, good night!"

And with these words, he rapidly quitted the house.

CHAPTER IX.

Though Lucien once more emerged from the mansion of the notary, and was again at large, he did not seem to have recovered his liberty. A host of besetting fancies held his mind in durance, and he could not escape from their control. He walked to his hotel, but when he arrived at the door, he hesitated to knock or ring. He felt that he could not sleep. He wanted exercise, not repose. His spirit seemed clogged and trammelled, and required the freshness of the open air. The night was far advanced, the moon was high in the heavens, and our hero felt himself to breathe and walk more lightly in its cooling beams. He turned away from the door of his lodgings, and sauntered off, he cared not in what direction.

Those who have passed through the ordeal of young life's troubles, may form an idea of the conflicting emotions, which struggled for

mastery in Lucien's breast. The words of the wily notary had sunk deep within him. This old master of his art had touched the chord, whose vibrations were sure to awaken the loudest echo in our hero's heart. His vanity, that pivot on which all his passions turned, had never been excited as now. His interest, that mainspring of action in all who breathe, was involved as it never before had been. His ambition was offered a field for its most unbounded display; but he wished to think all these as naught, compared to the opportunity promised him of proving the strength of his filial affection, of blotting out the record of his own dishonor—for such he had ever, but never so much as now, considered the fact of his father's embarrassments on his account. Every thing, in short, which could excite or dazzle such a mind as his, was all at once combined to overcome him. The moon went slowly down into the grey mists of dawn, and the light of morning was faintly breaking through them, while Lucien paced, with a hurried step, the promenade where he had ruminated so long, and so differently the preceding evening.

Many a wild phantasy of honor and distinction, of wealth and glory, was conjured up by his imagination during that night walk; many a throb of pride was swelling through him, but mixed with, combating, and finally conquering all, was the brighter, the better feeling of his young affection, in all its fervor, and purity and holiness. Love and Valerie came triumphant through the struggle.

"Yes, thus let me be tempted," cried Lucien, half aloud; "the love that suffers no assay can show no purity! Let the whole phalanx of worldly lures beset me, I can withstand them all. With her bright smile to cheer me on, I tread the labyrinth of mortal guiles unharmed. Her bosom is the haven of my hopes—there sheltered, I can smile on the syren blandishments of life."

Elevated by these feelings, he walked up and down the beaten path of the public promenade, his mind elate in conscious rectitude, and his heart swelling in the pride of its unshaken fidelity. While he paced along in this mood, a distant sound came onwards, breaking the stillness of the morning. It was the mixed noise of carriage wheels, and the clattering of many horses at full trot. Lucien stopped and listened, marvelling at such an interruption at so early hour, and wondering what cavalcade could be travelling at such speed. The sounds rapidly approached, and in a little while he distinguished through the haze a troop of about fifty dragoons coming forwards, and escorting three close carriages, with six horses each, which were driven at the quickest travelling pace. Several officers and equerries were mingled with the troopers, although Lucien was then ignorant of their distinctions. The *cortage* passed him with a rapidity that seemed to make him whirl round. Curiosity was baffled in attempting to distinguish the persons inside the carriages by that imperfect light, and conjecture was totally puzzled as to who or what they could be. The first notion that struck Lucien was, that they were prisoners of state, hurried on towards the capital, perhaps for trial; but while he cogitated, he observed that the whole party turned sharply down a little road to the left, and in a few minutes a cessation of all noise told plainly that they had stopped somewhere

close by. Pleased with the hopes of discovering something more of these mysterious travellers, he ran rapidly on in the direction they had taken; and just as he turned into the narrow road the carriages had struck into, he met an officer trotting briskly forwards, as if going back into the town. Lucien was never over-diffident when he wanted information, and he therefore unhesitatingly touched his hat, and asked the officer if he might venture to inquire who were the travellers that had just passed him. There was something at all times particularly striking in Lucien's appearance and manners, and the animation of his late sensations, and his immediate anxiety for information, might have heightened at the moment his usual air and address. The officer pulled up his horse, looked at his questioner, as if he measured him from head to foot, and answered,

"My lad, you ought to know who it is that has passed you. Every Frenchman ought to know it by instinct, almost; and such a fine handsome fellow as you are, should not be so long without having seen—aye, and fought by the side of the emperor."

"The emperor! was it he that passed me? I did indeed feel my head turn round. Is it possible it was he?"

"Aye, that it was, my lad; and you shall see him presently if you wish it. Go on there, and wait for me at the gate of yonder chateau—I shall be there directly—and I will get you admitted to see his majesty pass the garrison in review."

As the officer galloped off, his short cloak was blown on one side, and Lucien remarked, with the respect which grandeur always made on him, that the officer's breast was covered with gold lace, ribbons, clasps, and medals.

"Such might I one day have been! Such will Isambert be!" thought Lucien, as his eyes remained fixed on the turning of the road where the officer disappeared. But his attention was quickly roused by the rapid coming of two or three more officers and soldiers, galloping one after another at short intervals towards the town. Our hero let them pass, with only an admiring and envious look sent after each. He walked quickly towards the chateau, which lay in a hollow on the left. At the large wooden gate stood two sentinels, whom he did not attempt to approach; but he loitered near, anxiously waiting the officer's return. Several horsemen passed out of the gate while he watched, all at full gallop, and some returned; but half an hour elapsed before he recognised the one he wanted. As soon, however, as he appeared, Lucien ran forward and reached the gate just as he was entering. Lucien would have passed in, close to his horse's foot, but the sentries stopped him, and pushed him rudely back.

"Let me pass," cried Lucien, in a haughty tone: "I want to see the emperor, and that officer promised me that I should enter."

At these words the officer turned round on his horse, recognised Lucien, remembered his promise, smiled at the intrepid air with which the young stranger urged his right, and waving his hand to the sentries, he said,

"Let him pass—he follows me."

"Yes, Prince," replied the sentries, respectfully saluting; and

Lucien found himself within the wide and straggling court yard of the chateau, and close to the spot where rested for the moment the greatest man on earth. No one was more susceptible than he to the inspiration excited by the contiguity of greatness. He had never before been in such fellowship, and he had never felt as he did then. The officer, or the prince, as Lucien preferred considering him, galloped on, and left him quite to himself. He looked round the large space, enclosed within a high wall, and he saw himself the only visible unmilitary thing. The chateau terrace and steps were garnished with officers, warlike figures were seen moving to and fro inside the house, the court-yard was nearly filled by the dragoons who were cleaning their jaded horses, and every moment brought some fresh arrival from the town, of Gendarmes or soldiers, horse or foot. The sounds of martial music filled the air. Trumpets, bugles, and drums, from various quarters of the town and suburbs, kept up an incessant call on the garrison, to turn out from their beds and hasten to their parades. Soon the clatter of the earliest of the cavalry was heard approaching, and the gates were thrown wide open for their admission. They came in at the steady and accustomed pace of veterans, ever ready and never discomposed. The infantry soon followed, with their bands playing and eagles glittering; and, beyond the gates were visible to our hero crowds of the astonished and admiring citizens, who had hurried on, in vain hopes of being admitted to witness the review and gaze on the emperor.

The enclosed space in front of the chateau was of considerable extent, and retained many of those appearances which formerly marked it as a garden and pleasure ground. The remains of a shrubbery covered it here and there. A decaying arbor, a clump of trees, a pedestal for some statue, and the ruins of like ornaments were still standing, and rendered it, Lucien thought, a place but little suited for the evolutions of between three and four thousand men, who were now drawn up on parade. Directly in front of the chateau and extending from it for about sixty or seventy yards, was a parterre laid out in the formal but imposing style of French gardening, and thickly covered with flowers and plants of costly and rare descriptions, placed in most careful order and looking rich and beautiful. While Lucien took these observations, aid-de-camps and adjutants were trotting busily about, giving orders and making arrangements. Suddenly all the pioneers from the different regiments came to the front, and, with saws, and pickaxes, and hatchets, commenced simultaneously the work of dilapidation. Every pedestal and arbor and clump of trees was quickly levelled with the ground. Carts and barrows were in immediate readiness to carry out the rubbish; and, in less time than it appeared possible to our hero to have conceived the change, the whole of the space beyond the parterre presented a clear unbroken surface. The parterre, however, was spared from these destructive changes, and it looked more smiling and graceful from the contrast with the desolation beyond it.

During these operations Lucien observed a group of officers on the terrace in front of the chateau. He approached them as closely as he could, and was not long in distinguishing the figure of Napoleon.

A thrill of indescribable delight and awe rushed through him, as he gazed on this mighty monarch the creator and destroyer of kings. His simple dress—his unaffected mien—his profound and penetrating look, were all remarked by Lucien, as we gaze on the mysterious phenomena of Nature, and tremble while we admire. The influence of the Emperor on all around him seemed quite magical. A look, a nod was sufficient for the prompt apprehensions of the obsequious courtiers; and they flew in different directions, to communicate orders they seemed intuitively to have guessed at.

Nothing appeared to escape Napoleon's eagle glance. It rested for a while on Lucien's unobtrusive yet striking figure, and he turned suddenly round and said something to the officer next to him. It was he to whom Lucien had been indebted for the privilege he enjoyed; and a reply, as prompt as the observation, satisfied the Emperor, and turned his attention elsewhere.

A group of civilians, approaching in something like procession, now appeared. Napoleon saw what it was, and, with evident emotions of uneasiness and discontent, took two or three rapid turns on the terrace where he had been standing. He placed his hands crossed behind his back; and as he walked backwards and forwards, with his head bent and eyes cast down, the busy motion of his fingers told that he was conning something in his mind—of question or answer to the coming depudation. For it was the worthy citizens of Amiens who approached, represented by their magistrates and council. Nothing could have brought out into better relief the military promptitude and vigor of the scene, that this decrepid specimen of civil display. As the straggling members of the depudation concentrated themselves, and prepared to encounter the appalling presence of him they came to idolize, the individual exhibitions of perturbation and preparation were irresistibly ludicrous. While they all endeavored to rub the sleep from their eyes, and the cold from their hands, one worthy burger took off the large coat which had wrapped him from the morning air, and flung it on the ground; another disburthened his head of the black silk nightcap which had covered it; a third unbuttoned the woolen gaiters that had hitherto hid the display of his spindle shanks, decked in a pair of dirty white silk stockings. The spokesman carefully read over and over the paper containing his address, and his teeth chattered from fright even at this rehearsal. At length, however, they all moved forwards in couples, with bare heads and almost prostrate bodies. Napoleon turned round and stood calmly, ready to receive them; took two or three pinches of snuff, and bowed with the politic show of politeness, while the overpowered magistrate began his oration.

It consisted of the usual verbiage of which these fulsome things are formed. It was scarcely audible, from the trepidation of the orator. Napoleon listened with impatience, and when the magistrate made a short pause to recover breath, he took advantage of the moment, feigned to believe the address concluded, and spoke a few sentences of reply, rapidly, yet distinctly. Lucien caught some of the words. They referred to the war on which he was just then entering to decide the destinies of Europe; and the concluding expressions

being uttered in a more positive and peremptory tone, were not to be misaken.

"It is men I require, Monsieur the Mayor—men, not manufactures. I want your citizens to become soldiers. The towns that send me the most and best, are those which may expect my favor and protection. See to it, gentlemen; the conscription is at hand—the army is on the path to glory!"

With these words he gave some sign, perceptible to those who watched his every look; and in an instant his charger was led to the steps of the terrace, the discomfited depudation being forced to break away as best they might, and save themselves from the curvetings of the proud animal.

Without further notice of the citizens, the emperor mounted his horse; and, once in the saddle, the docile beast was as calm and temperate as though conscious that it bore the master of half the civilized world.

And now the review commenced. As soon as the emperor was mounted, the word was passed for the formation of the troops into column, and then the different evolutions began. The personal staff of Napoleon were in a few minutes on horseback, and close beside their chief. He stood out a little in front, only distinguished from them by the plainness of his dress, and the singular power of his look and appearance. Lucien gazed on him with fascinated eyes, and felt that he could willingly lay down his life that moment, to attract one approving glance from the mighty conqueror. As the troops began to move, and perform their various manœuvres on the ground that had been cleared for them, the countenance of Napoleon, which had till then displayed the gravity of command rather than its energy, began gradually to lighten up with a brighter expression. The muscles of his face came into active play, his eyes became enlarged, a smile of peculiar sweetness spread over his lips, his hollow cheeks began to glow, and the enthusiasm of the warrior dissolved the callousness of the king. As the infantry marched and wheeled, performing its evolutions with perfect skill, he was evidently moved to absolute delight. Frequent approving gestures encouraged them. He took snuff, in quantities that proved the act of doing so the mere force of habit during his pleased abstraction. As the three regiments marched past him, he gave them ample reason to be satisfied with themselves and him. He loudly praised them to the generals around him, and they filed away in evident enthusiasm about their great chieftain. Napoleon on this occasion, while reviewing this (comparatively) handful of soldiers, proved himself truly a man of genius; for genius alone can enter into the consideration of trifles, and clothe them with the consequence of mighty matters and events. It is imagination, the grand attribute of genius, that supplies the deficiency, and brings to the highest level of importance that which with common minds, would ever retain its littleness.

But it was when the six squadrons of dragoons began to move, that Napoleon really felt the inspiration of the scene. The infantry had filed off through the gate, and the distant sounds of their music, were gradually dying away, when a flourish of trumpets announced

the cavalry manœuvres. The clatter of the horses and their harness-ed riders, as they filed and wheeled about, stirred up each beholder's blood, and the emperor's not the least. Several charges took place at his orders, superbly executed, but in a space too confined to allow of their full effect. Napoleon ordered the whole to retreat to the very extremity of the court-yard, and he himself hastily retired from the place he had occupied in front of the paterre. He now almost touched the terrace of the chateau, and when the squadrons had wheeled round, and faced him, he commanded in his own person another charge. Like lightning the word was obeyed, down clattered the whole line, the full length of the court, and as they touched on the paterre all seemed to expect the word to halt. The officers of the staff looked at the emperor in anxious hope that he would speak—but his mind was far abroad, not prisoned to a flower plat. He gave no word, the squadrons came on; in a moment the whole treasures of the paterre were trampled into atoms, rooted up, annihilated. Several horses stumbled over the shrubs and flower pots, and fell—Napoleon heeded them not—nor ever gave the looked for word, till the foremost line almost touched his horse's head. Pursuant to his command, in an instant they halted, and wheeled round again; and another retreating charge completed the destruction of the doomed paterre, and ended the martial display.

Several of the dismounted troopers recovered their seats and rode back to rejoin their troops. Two were unable to move; and some of the attendant observers raised them from the ground, and bore them away. One had a leg broken, the other a skull fractured; and the pale faces of both were turned full upon Napoleon, as he spoke loudly to their more fortunate comrades.

"Soldiers, I am well pleased with you to-day. To-morrow shall see you rewarded. You march at dawn to join the grand army."

"Long live the Emperor! Long live Napoleon the great," was shouted by every voice. Even the poor wounded wretches on the earth beneath him, feebly joined in the sound. But these exclamations fell dull and damp on Napoleon's ear. The delusion of the scene was gone. The world he had created had vanished with the breath of man's applause. He recognized the reality of the narrow sphere he moved in. Scorn of the insufficient space took place of his high-wrought energy; his countenance lost its brightness, it became at once dull, dignified, and gloomy; he cast a cold and careless look upon the wounded sufferers beneath him, dismounted from his horse, and walked hastily into the chateau.

Lucien, who had observed him closely, stood transfixed to the spot. He was carried away into forgetfulness of all, but the contemplation of the wonderful being who filled his eyes. He saw the wounded soldiers carried off, the carriages with fresh horses brought to the door, and the emperor and his immediate followers enter them, while the rest mounted their horses, and all rapidly dashed off, without deigning a visit to the town. It was the garrison only that he cared for.

All the beholders of the scene with the exception of Lucien, had followed the cavalcade. While our hero stood alone and thoughtful,

he was aroused from his reverie by a voice of wailing, and looking round him he saw sitting on the terrace steps, an old grey-headed man, with eyes fixed on the desolated parterre, wringing his hands in anguish, and loudly venting his feelings. It was the old gardener of the chateau, who had thus witnessed in an hour, the destruction of half a century of care, of labor, and of pride.

"Curse on the conqueror! Death to the destroyer," cried he: "callous to all but his own greatness, men are his slaves, and nature itself his byword of contempt. He cares not what hearts he rings with grief, what regions he lays desolate. Why should I then wonder at his wanton waste? He goes now to finish the conquest of the world—to devastate whole realms, as he has ruined this garden. But the day may come, when not one shrub shall shadow the destroyer's grave!"

Lucien turned away, walked to his inn, got his horse, and sauntered home; the scene of the morning, and the old man's anathema filling his brain and ringing in his ears.

CHAPTER X.

The transactions just described took place in the latter end of April, 1812. Napoleon, big with his vast designs, was then on the point of leaving France, to put himself at the head of the combined forces with which he was about to open his crusade against the north. Previous to his departure, he had made several rapid and almost secret journeys into different parts of the kingdom, inspecting fortresses, reviewing depots, and taking garrisons by surprise. He had thus with his own eyes seen the state of things in almost every important quarter, and formed his judgment, on personal observation, of the condition and disposition of the troops he was about to leave behind him. He had made a hasty visit to some of the strong places on the northern frontier, and in the Netherlands; and returning to Paris, he had suddenly left the direct road, and totally unexpected, he appeared, as we have seen, at Amiens.

Napoleon mortally hated on these occasions the pompous parade of corporation loyalty, and, above all things, the fastian eloquence in which the addresses were written and spoken. To avoid as much as could be escaped from of these solemnities, he often took up his residence at some house in the suburbs of the town, and declined to occupy the official mansions of the mayors or prefects; and, as had just taken place, he most frequently avoided even entering the town at all, making the municipal authorities come to him to his country quarters, and cutting as short as possible the measure of their servile eulogy. The chateau which he had this time chosen for his halting place at Amiens, was the property of one of those emigrants

who had refused to return to France, notwithstanding all the encouragement held out in the imperial promises, and against whom a positive decree of banishment was afterwards issued for contempt of it. Napoleon did not of course hold these recusants in great good will; and he thought nothing of the passing inconvenience, or permanent annoyance occasioned by his three hours sojourn, in the present instance, at the uninhabited house of a man who despised his inducements or detested his rule. The officer of his household, on whom depended the providing of proper quarters on the Emperor's flying excursions, knew well the particular situation of every habitation likely to suit his purposes, near most of the principal towns, and this like the others, had been noted down as the one most fit for his reception. It was kept in good order, scantily, but sufficiently furnished, and a few servants retained, at the expense, for many years, of the absent proprietor; and the garden and shrubberies, where his happiest hours of childhood had been spent, were preserved at considerable cost, in the order in which the emperor found them. His act of destruction was not by any means premeditated. The clearing away the remains of the shrubbery he did not stop to consider as worth a thought; but the wanton ravages of the *parterre* was, as it has been described, the effect of a sudden and uncontrollable impulse. When done he experienced not the least regret. The feelings of the obstinate absentee, were of perfect indifference, to him; but his keen sense of justice made him order, before he left the place, an ample equivalent for the damage, to be charged to his private purse—and he commanded a pension of several hundred francs to be settled on the old gardener, whose sorrow did not escape his penetrating eye, though it made but faint impression on his heart.

These points adjusted, and his hasty breakfast dispatched, he proceeded rapidly on his way to the capital, to take his final measures of departure; having long planned the whole of that stupendous undertaking, which was destined, like the pyramids of the Egyptian kings, to be but an unwieldy record of perishing power and vain ambition.

And while the imperial traveller hurried on with all the speed which his horses could put forth, our hero returned homewards at his animal's easiest pace, with his mind as full of plans and projects (and all of as mighty import to himself) as was that of the great conqueror for whom the world was too small.

Lucien was received by Valerie and his father with more than a common welcome, for they (need I say *she* in particular?) were somewhat uneasy at the unusual circumstance of his having been absent all night. They were, however, relieved from all anxiety, by ascertaining that he was safe and well; and Valerie soon observed in him an air of extraordinary buoyancy that seemed to elevate him above himself. She knew the peculiarities of his mind, and she was certain that some event of rare occurrence had given this coloring to his manners. She did not, however, seek to force the revelation from him, but quietly, though anxiously, waited his own time.

Mr. Lacourtelle began his inquiries as to the result of Lucien's mission, with an uneasiness too evident to be trifled with. Lucien

thought the best answer would be the production of the instrument which he had obtained from Bonnard, and by which the astonished father saw that he had a whole year's respite for payment, and that his debt was reduced to less than half the sum for which he believed himself involved. He pressed Lucien for a detail of the means by which he had effected these unexpected conditions, and Lucien gave a brief, but graphic sketch of his interview with the notary, and made a full confession of the part he himself had acted, and of the varied sensations which had accompanied his conduct from first to last. He then narrated the circumstances of his interview with the emperor; and being on this subject even more animated than on the former, he produced on his listeners a vivid impression of the scene, and of all that passed in his own mind in connection with it; and from the oft-repeated description of this, his father and other friends had it as much by heart (though by no means as much at heart) as he had, and from their accounts at second hand, I have enabled to retail it, as I have done in the last two chapters.

From the day of Lucien's return home a week or more passed by, spent by him in a state of mingled ferment and constraint. Deeply and devotedly as he loved Valerie, he felt that he must leave her. Fate seemed to have decided the necessity of military service as a part of his existence. He could not conceal from himself that peace, fortune, love, all combined, could have no permanent charms for him, while the canker of ungratified ambition was gnawing at his heart. His passion for a military life might perhaps have been stifled amidst the tranquil joys of home and happiness, had not the memorable scene at Amiens, and the fascination of Napoleon's fame, called it too powerfully into action to make its suppression possible. Feeling but a source of self torment in efforts to extinguish this his ruling passion, he at length resolved to let it run its course unobstructed; and the only lingering pain he experienced in so doing, was from the difficulty of concealing from Valerie, or the still greater one of confessing to her, feelings and intentions which must soon, very soon, cause her so much misery.

But a part of this disquietude he might have spared himself. Attempted concealment from her, was unnecessary and fruitless. She knew all that he had to acknowledge. From the day of his return from Amiens, it was impossible to deceive her. His animated description of the emperor, of the prince he had conversed with, of the scene he had witnessed, were indications, as strong as fact itself, to the eager watchfulness of Valerie's mind that Lucien was about to leave her. When, or how he meant to effect his resolution to become a soldier, she knew not, nor had he indeed decided, when a most unlooked for arrival, and its consequences, gave him the wished for opportunity.

One day as the family party were sitting at their frugal dinner, not expecting, nor prepared for a visitor, a gentleman appeared at the outer door; and before Mr. Lacourtelles had time to go out of the room, to receive him with the courtesy due to a stranger, he walked in with an air of mixed politeness and familiarity. He bowed to Valerie with a marked expression of respect, more alightly to Luci-

en; and stretching his hand towards Mr. Lacourteille, claimed his, for his old acquaintance, Isambert Duflos.

It was hard to tell which of the party was most surprised. Lucien and Valerie both reddened deeply—from different feelings however. Mr. Lacourteille stared at Isambert, while he grasped his hand firmly, and looked at him long before he was quite convinced of his identity. His appearance was much changed and infinitely improved. He had grown into the height and full proportions of manhood, and was now in figure as nearly as possible the same as Lucien. He was by no means so handsome, but he had acquired an air of military firmness that was more marked and decided than his. He was better dressed too, than on the day of his former visit, and was altogether superior in appearance to what Valerie remembered of him on that occasion. His manners were quite unchanged, frank and careless in their general tone, but particularly decided and impressive when he wished to give strength to any observation that fell from him.

After the warm welcome of Mr. Lacourteille, the forced civility of Lucien, and the courteous salutation of Valerie were duly acknowledged, and Isambert had taken his place at table, he hastened to explain the circumstances which had so soon terminated his military career, and brought him back to France. In lightly touching the details of his services in Spain, where he had been sent direct from Flixecourt with the batch of his fellow conscripts, he did not quite suppress the circumstances which had gained him such honorable mention in the public despatches. From the peculiar good luck which follows some men in their military career, he had been enabled to afford, on the very day that gained him admission to the Legion of Honor, protection and safety to the family of a rich and grateful Spanish grandee, who insisted on his receiving as his right, but still insufficient reward, a portion of the valuable property which his bravery and generosity had preserved. This gift of a portion of what was his own, had he preferred the laws of war to the dictates of integrity, was presented to him in valuable diamonds, as being more portable, and more easily transferred to cash than any other kind of securities. Isambert safely preserved the diamonds until an opportunity offered of disposing of them, in one of the great towns to which his regiment was soon removed; and having procured the best price he could, which was far below their value, he transmitted the bills to old Bonnaud at Amiens, by whose means it was that he had known of Mr. Lacourteille's want of a substitute for his son, and through whom the whole arrangement had been made. Isambert wrote to the old notary ample directions for the disposal of his remittance, desiring in the first place, a certain portion to be immediately handed to his father, and next, that the outstanding claim against Mr. Lacourteille should be instantly bought up in his name, and that gentleman allowed his own time for the payment. The notary performed the latter part of his orders, with a slight exception or two; he totally suppressed all mention of Isambert's name in the purchase, calculating upon the great probabilities that he would never return; he bought up the bonds in *his own name*, by a private agreement with the original lender of the money, by which he ser-

cured a large allowance to himself in consideration of prompt payment, and he took steps to pursue Mr. Lacourtelles for the whole, with all the vengeful rigours of the law.

Mr. Lacourtelles's gratitude to Isambert, and Lucien's indignation against Bonnard prompted frequent interruption at this part of the narrative; both being anxious to relate to Isambert the particulars of Lucien's interview with the legal villain. But Isambert stopped them short, by assuring them that he was acquainted with the whole affair; and he proceeded to state, that subsequently to the good fortune which he had already mentioned, he had had the still greater of actually saving the life of his general, one of the most distinguished marshals of France, who, in his unbounded gratitude, offered every thing to his preserver that his influence could procure. Promotion was the first thing that occurred to the marshal—but it happened to be the very last that suited Isambert. He had done his duty, as has been seen, with distinguished zeal; had gained the applause and admiration of all ranks for his exemplary conduct and courage; but he hated the life of a soldier. He hated the scenes of blood, the reckless waste of time, the total dissipation of mind, and the abounding profligacy which were too much the avoidless characteristics of the profession. He, therefore, to the astonishment of the marshal and all his companions, (but he could not forfeit their esteem,) requested, as the reward most congenial to his desires, an immediate discharge from the service; and asked another private favour, which it would be premature to mention here. The first request was, after remonstrance and almost reproach had been exhausted, granted to him; and thus, at the expiration of two years he found himself released from his engagement, which had bound him to serve for five; and without one day's delay he hurried back to France, and arrived at his father's house in the neighbourhood of Amiens, as soon as a letter could have travelled to announce his coming.

"My first visit," said Isambert, concluding his recital, "was, as you will suppose, to my parents—for I have both father and mother still living—and to my great delight I found them well, and to *theirs* I convinced them that I was so too, after all my perils. It was yesterday morning that I reached home. In the afternoon, I visited our common friend old Bonnard. Since the day that Mr. Lucien Lacourtelles caught him napping he has not had such a fright, depend upon it, as my appearance caused him. The devil himself could not have surprised him so much. Our interview was a long one, but it ended well. The old wretch acknowledged his iniquity, detailed all that passed with you, refunded the money which I had transmitted him, and the first use I made of part of it was to pay off the six thousand francs you owed him, and here, I have the pleasure to present you your bond, with a full acquittal for principal and interest."

"And now," continued he, seeing that both father and son were preparing to speak their thanks, and that Valerie was most eloquently uttering hers through the medium of her bright yet brimful eyes, "and now, that we may quite comprehend the footing on which we stand, and to prevent your misconceiving it for a moment, let me tell you that it was not my money that redeemed this bond, but *yours*. You know

that you paid me ten thousand francs for my promised service for five years, for which period you conceived your son released from all conscription claims. So did I ; and when I got my discharge from the army at the end of two years, I thought that in strict justice the exemption granted to me for life should have extended to him that I represented. So in justice it should, but you know that law and justice are not quite the same ; and I found yesterday on making the inquiry at Amiens that the favor granted to me was merely personal ; that Lucien Lacourtelle was no fitter as ever to serve us a soldier ; and that he may be drawn again for the conscription at the Mairie of Flizecourt to-morrow. That being the case, I was clearly bound to refund you the proportion of the money you paid me equivalent to three years' service ; it amounted to six thousand francs exactly, and I thought the best and most pleasing way to you to receive it would be in the redemption of your bond. I therefore"—— but he suddenly stopped, on perceiving that Valerie turned pale, rose hastily, and quitted the room.

This circumstance spoke her secret only to him who knew it before. Isambert attached no meaning of its true nature to this change of color, and Mr. Lacourtelle was too much interested in the conversation to give any thing else his minute attention. Valerie therefore escaped undiscovered ; though not unobserved ; and ill as she felt herself, she could not fail to remark the strong emotion visible on Isambert's countenance, at the betrayal of hers. Lucien followed her from the room, to cheer her with such comforting assurances as he could give ; but a new pang had been added to the certainty that he wished to go as a soldier, by the knowledge that he was liable to be forced away.

During the time that Lucien and Valerie were absent from the room, Mr. Lacourtelle had communicated to Isambert, for whom his former faking had justly increased ten-fold, much of the circumstances of the last two years. He particularly told of the arrival of the De Villeforte family, of Henriette's evident attachment to his son, and he confessed that he had given a full account of it to Bonnard while inducing him to withhold his demands, in the notion that Lucien's marriage to the romantic beauty would have soon enabled him to clear off the incumbrance of that debt. Mr. Lacourtelle, in his cordial confidence, and cheered by a more than usual portion of wine, acknowledged to Isambert that his next wish after seeing Lucien married was to find a fitting husband for Valerie, and he so broadly hinted his wish that Isambert himself might prove the man that the latter could not affect to himself a want of consciousness as to the extent of those wishes.

On Valerie's return to the dining-room, she replied to her uncle's inquiries for Lucien, that he had gone for a short time to Flizecourt, and she apologized in his name to Isambert, who readily pardoned an absence of which she spoke the excuse. Isambert's conversation with Mr. Lacourtelle had given to his manner that kind of thoughtful animation which is so distinct from the every-day gaiety of little minds. Although his words did not come from him exactly as if they were either weighed or measured, they spoke a meaning of solid enjoyment, as unlike to levity as it was to gloom. He talked to Valerie in a strain of mixed amusement and instruction, at least what Valerie felt she ought to have acknowledged as such, and that at

another time she most undoubtedly would. But with the horrible thought before her of Lucien's being drawn again for a conscript, amusement nor instruction had no existence for her. Isambert talked on without appearing to be affected by her want of attention. In fact, he was so occupied in the thoughts excited by Mr. Lacourtel's discourse, and in the flow of spirits arising from it, that he overlooked Valerie's abstraction and his own inability to remove it. At length, to his infinite annoyance and Valerie's relief, and to the great delight of Mr. Lacourtel, Henriette de Villaforte made her appearance, to pay her usual afternoon visit. She had walked from the chateau alone, and she came in with that peculiar air of easy cordiality, which is so irresistibly attractive when the heart is evidently its inspiration. Her face wore its brightest glow of health and animation, and the elegance of her manners completed the combination of all that was required to make a very striking impression at first sight.

Henriette's first impulse was to cast an inquiring glance around the room, which, not containing the object of her search, held nothing of any great interest to her. She was, notwithstanding, as fond of Valerie as she could be of any one that was not *the* one paramount mark of attachment. She had a great respect also for Mr. Lacourtel, and she liked to regard both him and Valerie with those feelings of kindred, in which something told her she would one day have a right to view them. She had never had the remotest notion that the attachment which she saw between Valerie and Lucien was more than what might exist between brother and sister. And I may here mention that Valerie, though well aware of the nature of Henriette's feelings towards Lucien, knew nothing of that petty jealousy which is falsely supposed to be the test of woman's love, and which turns all her feelings into gall, because another can admire the object of her affection. This sort of jealousy arises from selfishness, not love; for *that* delights in seeing the beloved one the attraction round which the innoxious brilliancy of beauty and grace may sport, as lightning plays round the magnetic rod it illumines but cannot consume. Valerie put her whole trust in Lucien's faith, and while sure of him she had no fear from others.

The effect produced on Isambert by Henriette's manner was pleasing, so much so that he recovered from the discontent which her interruption at first caused, and he listened to the animated flow of her conversation, rather amused by the absent air which accompanied all she said, while her self-betraying glances were perpetually turned towards the window which commanded a view of Flizecourt. To her great relief, and to Valerie's evident joy, Lucien at length made his appearance; but he seemed ill at ease. His whole manner evinced a struggle of powerful feelings, which none of the party were able completely to understand—but Valerie, and she alone, feared that she conjectured rightly as to its cause.

Lucien received all the marked attentions of Henriette with a composed indifference, except on two or three occasions, when a momentary feeling of gratified vanity prompted him to let Isambert see the emotion he had the power to excite. And even these partial

returns which he made to her kind looks and words, seemed to satisfy Henriette, whose imagination easily filled up the long intervals of his abstraction, by the supposed workings of timidity, delicacy and dread—which she firmly reckoned on as the sole preventives to Lucien's full and formal declaration of an attachment, of which she never doubted the existence.

The closing in of evening gave its warning for Henriette's departure. The whole party rose to accompany her on her way towards home; but after walking all together for a while in the direction of the chateau, Lucien contrived to detach Mr. Lacourtelle from the rest, and making an apology to Henriette, they left her and Valerie in Isambert's care; and father and son sauntered off on another path. As soon as they were out of hearing of the others, Lucien said,

"Well now, my dear father, every thing promises you prosperity and peace. This Isambert has certainly acted nobly by us, and you see yourself, thank Heaven, free from all the trouble I have caused you for two years past."

"Yes, my boy, Isambert has indeed fully proved himself what my first impression told me he was; all now looks well, and but one or two things are wanting to complete the happiness of us all. I think I know what you have taken me aside for? Do I guess rightly? Come, come, I'll relieve your embarrassments—you want to speak to me about *Mademoiselle de Villeforte*?"

"*Mademoiselle de Villeforte*! No, indeed, father, I do not."

"Yes you do—there is no use in denying it—but I will spare all your confusion—I take it all upon myself. It is a brilliant thing, my boy—and tomorrow morning I will wait upon her aristocratical old father, and rouse the thick blood in his noble veins, by proposing such a son-in-law as none of his feudal progenitors ever had. Leave it all to me, Henriette will have an independent fortune, and a fine one, you dog, at her mother's death—I'll warrant you I shall get over their scruples, if any exist. You shall have her—never fear—I promise her to you."

"My dear father, you quite mistake me—I swear to you you do. You forget the conscription—that I am again liable—"

"A fig for the conscription! What even if you were drawn? Old *De Villeforte* shall buy you off at any price."

"*De Villeforte*! What in God's name have I, can I have to do with him? You are laboring under a dreadful delusion, my dear father—the shock you will receive by and by will open your eyes to the fact."

"Shock! What do you call a shock? You think he'll refuse me? He'll not dare to do that, Lucien. My father made *his* fly before now, in fear and trembling—and he will not venture to rouse my blood, depend on it. He knows the *Lacourtelles*, as well he may! So now, Lucien, leave all to me. Say nothing more to me now—I have put myself in a passion with this aristocrat already, but I shall be with him to-morrow."

Lucien, finding it vain to oppose for the time his father's obstinate error, left him at length and went off in search of Valerie. He met her and Isambert returning to the house, where Mr. Lacourtelle

soon appeared; and after some few words of common-place conversation, Lucien contrived again to escape from the presence of his father and their visitor; and Valerie following his signal, they were once more together, unobserved and unheard by all the world.

But how different was their brief and anguished interview, from those delicious hours of stolen intercourse which had shortened and brightened every day for the last two years! Lucien had made up his mind, in desperation, to communicate to Valerie before-hand, the intelligence which the morrow was to proclaim to all. She, on her part, too clearly anticipated the disclosure he was about to make. She had known him too long—had watched him too well, to hesitate in her conviction of the course he was so decided on taking. The whole tenor of his conversation and conduct, from the day of his return from Amiens, had impressed her with the certainty of his intended voluntary service as a soldier: and when she heard Lambert that day pronounce his liability to be drawn, and saw the flush of animation which the statement caused on Lucien's brow, her heart sunk within her, and drew with it, as we have seen, every drop of the blood that mantled in her cheeks. Still, although Valerie could feel the very depths of emotion, she had a fund of strength of mind that rarely failed her. She had good sense, as well as strong feeling; and she possessed, besides, a fine quality of pride, that told her what was due to herself in all the varying accidents of life. She could not consent to be an unsuccessful suppliant for mercy, even at the feet of Lucien, and she felt that it would be almost as degrading to her to use that last resource of womanly persuasion, to make him change a resolution on which his present peace and her own chance of future happiness depended. She saw clearly, that were he now induced to abandon his design, it would be the creation of utter misery to him, from which would spring, perhaps, contempt and aversion to her who would have been its cause. Under the influence, then, of all these reasonings, she was prepared to hear, and to support as best she might, the avowal which trembled on Lucien's quivering lip.

Valerie in the midst of her own wretchedness strove to lessen his agitation and embarrassment, and she led to, rather than avoided his confession, that when he parted from her that evening he went to the Greffier at Flixecourt, who had the management of the lots for the drawing to take place the next day, and that, by a particular manner of rolling the papers to be placed in the vase, Lucien was to be aware of those which ensured the fate of the drawers. He had adopted the usual means employed, in persuading the underlings of office to induce the Greffier to make this arrangement, and the latter satisfied his conscience for the act of connivance, by the consideration that he was thus instrumental in gaining for the emperor's service the finest lot in the commune.

Valerie summoned all her fortitude to listen to this decisive detail. She now saw that no rational hope was left for her; and with an energy, which might almost be called heroism, she immediately began to repeat the preparations for her lover's departure, which two years before she made with a heart less firm even than now. For her affliction in the first instance was even greater than the present,

her nerves being then not strung by the certainty of her lover's tried attachment, which now seemed to brace her spirits and counteract the workings of despair. Valerie retired to her own chamber, and Lucien returned to the sitting room where supper was prepared. The woman-servant soon brought an excuse for Valerie's non-appearance, and Lucien early withdrew, leaving his father and Isambert to the discussion of their repast, and the various topics of public and private interest which arose from its inspirations. Long after both had retired to their beds, Lucien and Valerie continued their sad employment and more sad discourse; both borne up, by their several exciting feelings, against the misfortune of a separation, which they acknowledged to be inevitable.

CHAPTER XI.

The drawing for the conscription was fixed for an early hour the following morning, and Lucien attended punctually at the *Marie*. As soon as his turn for drawing came, he put in his hand with a quiet certainty of the result, but with none of the haughty impatience which so distinguished him on the former occasion. He pulled forth the lot—it was examined and proclaimed—Lucien was announced a second time a conscript—passed hastily through the hands of the junta within—and, while he calmly but resolutely walked through the village, he sent forward a swift messenger to announce to his father that he was decidedly a soldier.

Mr. Lacourtelles and Isambert were at breakfast, when the messenger arrived. Valerie could not venture to appear. The man announced his intelligence abruptly at the open window, and no sooner did Mr. Lacourtelles understand it fully, than he commenced his preparations for hastening his visit to the *Chateau de Villeforte*. He seemed to have expected this result, and he reckoned on the certainty of his own and Henriette's influence with her father being undoubtedly strong enough to obtain his purpose. Isambert, who two years before had witnessed Mr. Lacourtelles's suffering in the dread of losing his son, could not now help moralizing on the variability of the human mind, when he saw his father on the very point of enduring the certainty of the evil he had before had the means of averting, and confiding in a most improbable contingency, his only chance for escape, without any apparent symptom of uneasiness. But this instance was but a proof of the too common readiness with which men cling to the faint hopes of aid from others, on points which, when dependent on their own exertions, they almost despair of.

Mr. Lacourtelles hastily buttoned on his short cotton gaiters, fixed his hat firmly on his head, took his stick in his hand, and thus plainly equipped, and winding up his contemptuous dislike of the aristocrat

to its highest pitch, he set off on the proposed visit, which was to terminate in a demand for his daughter's hand, and an immediate sum of money to buy off Lucien's service.

About an hour before this departure, a scene occurred at the Chateau de Villeforte, which, by a curious coincidence, had decided its haughty possessor to set off to pay a visit, but of a very different nature, to Mr. Lacourtelles. Scarcely had Mr. de Villeforte sallied forth from his dressing room that morning, and taken his early cup of coffee, in the large and half furnished saloon, when he was surprised and somewhat alarmed at the abrupt entrance of his daughter Henriette. Her hair was dishevelled, her eyes filled with tears, her dress disordered, and her whole air and appearance, something between that of a maniac and a tragedy queen. Her father was accustomed to her romantic flights, but he thought there was more of reality in her present distress, than he had ever before observed, and he anxiously moved towards her with open arms and inquiring looks. Henriette flung herself on her knees at his feet; such a proceeding being in all affairs of the kind, what a gambler would call a *jeu de regle*, and for several minutes she vainly attempted to utter something, through a host of obstructing sobs and sighs and other convulsions.

I may take advantage of her situation to explain to the reader, what she found it so hard to tell her father. It was simply that she had just heard of Lucien's being present at the Mairie at Flizecourt, to answer the call upon his name, and of his liability to serve as a conscript. She acquired this information from one of the servants, who had come up to the chateau with frequent bulletins of the progress of the drawing, some anxiety having been either felt or assumed by the family, particularly the young ladies, on account of Camille de Villeforte, whose name was also on the list, but who ran little risk, as his mother had a purse of several thousand francs ready to pay for the immediate purchase of a substitute, in case that one of the lots should fall upon her darling son. Henriette had often heard the story of Isambert's connection with the Lacourtelles, and knew that it was he whom she had seen the previous evening at their house. But Valerie had held back the painful information of Lucien's liability, caused by Isambert's return, and her own suspicions of his determination to become a soldier. She knew the state of Henriette's heart, and neither wished to inflict on her any of the pain she herself experienced, (the ordinary relief to a selfish mind) nor would she risk the exposure of her friend's wild and unregulated feelings before a stranger. The news of the following morning broke upon Henriette, therefore, with all the becoming agonies of a romantic denouement; and she ran as we have seen her, to her father's feet—having first taken due care to disencumber her beautiful brown tresses of the unsagitating accessories of combs and papillotes.

"What on earth is the matter with you, Henriette," asked Mr. de Villeforte, assuming an indifference, which was foreign to what he felt. "What new boon have you to ask? Has your pet rabbit done some mischief in the garden, or your cat broken a china cup? Come, come, tell me your misfortune—your pardon is granted before hand."

"Oh, my dear father," cried she, in half articulate tones, with real tears streaming down her cheeks, "do not act like those fifty-hearted parents, who doom their offspring to perpetual woe—take pity on me!"

"Now really, Henriette, this is going too far. Get up, like a good girl, and wipe your eyes."

"Wipe my eyes! Oh, Heavens, is it thus a father can speak to his heart-breaking child? Wipe my eyes! Is that the only comfort in my affliction? Is that the only balm for the despair which has seized not only upon me, but which at this moment consumes him, who is my world—my all—myself."

"Him! Who! What do you mean?" quickly demanded the father, fancying that he at length saw some cause of danger, where he at first only suspected mere trifling. "Explain yourself instantly, Henriette. I command you to tell me what you mean by this rhapsody."

"Rhapsody!" echoed she; "and is it thus the throes of the heart's sufferings are called? Thus the excruciated utterances of agony is reviled? Rhapsody! Oh! cruel, cruel father!"

"In the name of Heaven, Henriette, I implore you to have a moment's common sense!"

"Common sense!"

"Nay, don't interrupt me, girl! Tell me what you want—what has happened to you—who is implicated in this extravagance of yours? Answer me these questions, and I'll do what I can for you?"

"You will? You will? You do already relent? The tears of love have then thawed the ice of paternal rigor? And you will save him and me? There is no time to be lost—at this moment the drawing may be over—the fatal lots assigned. He may now, even now, be a conscript!"

"What then you foolish girl, is this all? And what if he is a conscript? I'll buy him off, cost what it will."

"On, noble, generous, princely father! you will then save him to me, and me to him!" and with these words Henriette embraced the old man's knees, and squeezed his legs so tightly in her impassioned pressure, that he tottered and nearly fell. I think it is unnecessary to say, that while Henriette's feelings and observations, and pleadings, had Lucien for their object, her father's perception had only pointed to his own son Camille, as the cause of her solicitude: and he, getting tired of her unnecessary heroics to save her brother from a merely imaginary danger, was determined to put an end to the scene.

"Let me go, you foolish girl," cried he, pettishly; "you will pull me down on the floor. What nonsense is all this! It is carrying your usual absurdity too far, Henriette. You know well that I never would have suffered your brother to go for a common conscript."

"My brother! my brother!" exclaimed Henriette, starting up, pushing her hair off her face, and taking a slanting glance at the large mouldy mirror beside her; "and is it, is it for the simple instinct of sisterly regard, that you have mistaken the mystic fermentations of

love, which have come glooming and bubbling up from the soul's deep caverns? Have the dark wings of destiny been flapping before your eyes, to blind you to my desperation, and shut out the real object of my devotion? Have you in the mists of wilful ignorance seen the form of Camille de Villeforte for that of Lucien Lacourtelles? Oh, Lucien, Lucien, Lucien!" and here she flung herself upon an old faded flesh-coloured satin sofa, in a very becoming attitude, and left one of her eyes sufficiently uncovered to allow her to distinguish the effect produced on her father.

If the black wings and the mists alluded to by Henriette, had really hovered round Mr. De Villeforte, her last exclamation completely dissipated them, and he saw, with the keen eye of an astronomer, into the whole system of planetary influences under which his daughter had been acting. The truth flashed upon him in a moment; and, with a passing curse upon his own folly, in having sanctioned the intimacy with the Lacourtelles, none of whom he had yet seen, he took the instant resolution of paying an immediate visit to the head of that family, to command his interference, or purchase his consent, for the prevention of further mischief; and to take measures for Lucien's prompt removal from the neighbourhood, should the conscription have unfortunately spared him.

He therefore rang the bell, requested the instant presence of the baroness, told her briefly and reproachfully the discovery he had made, consigned Henriette to her charge, and, retiring to his dressing-room, he called his old valet to assist in making his toilette, with such effect as he thought likely to produce a fitting sensation upon the democratical rustic whom he was going to honor by his visit.

The ready valet had made rapid way in the embellishment and equipment of his old master. He had put the broad gold buckles in his high-quartered shoes, had tightly drawn up and fastened at the knees, his blue and white striped silk stockings, had gone gradually upwards in the various articles of dress, fastened the stiff white stock round the neck, and was just giving a finishing frizzing to the left side curls, when a footman announced the arrival of Mr. Lacourtelles, and his request for an immediate interview with Mr. de Villeforte, on business of the utmost importance.

This abrupt announcement threw Mr. de Villeforte somewhat off his centre. He, as most others, had a considerable dislike to be taken by surprise, and felt the usual inconveniences it occasions. He was quite at a loss how to act in this emergency. He had prepared the plan of his projected visit—what he was to say—how he was to look, to stand, to go—how to enter the house, and how to come out, and to be cut off in this way from the whole effect of this display! Who would not pity poor Mr. de Villeforte? He never, however, doubted Mr. Lacourtelles's feeling and thinking on the main subject just as he did; he was certain his visit now was to anticipate his aristocratic wrath, by a renunciation of all hope on the part of his son, and most probably, to propose his receiving a pecuniary reward for giving up the thing; and he resolved to assume an air of dignified protection to the suppliant father, and to spare his feelings, as much as was consistent with the dignity of the De Villefortes.

Having thrown his flowered silk dressing gown loosely round him, he returned to the drawing-room, and taking a chair by the fire side, he put on his best air of superannuated puppyism, and ordered the servant to show Mr. Lacourtelle into the room. The latter, who rather impatiently paced the marble flagging of the vestibule, almost anticipated the servant's intimation that he might enter, and was inside the door of the drawing-room as soon as it was opened for him. He touched his hat as he brushed the footman, and, without uncovering his head, he walked bolt into the middle of the room. Mr. de Villeforte, though somewhat startled, was courtier enough to seem unmoved by what would have ruffled a man of more nerve but less fashion. The start, for it was a start, with which he rose from his chair, received from his ready air all the grace of a friendly advance; for the sturdy manner of his visitor made him instantly change his tactics, and instead of his former haughty preparation of countenance, he was now all smiles and cordiality. Mr. Lacourtelle did not expect this, neither did he doubt its sincerity; and his heart being a good deal softened by the situation of his son, he was, like many a trusting dupe, deceived by the serpent insincerity before him. As Mr. de Villeforte came up to him, bowing and smiling, Mr. Lacourtelle took off his hat, and sat down, as he was requested, on one of the old satin covered chairs, which felt to the rough republican exceedingly soft and rickety.

As soon as he was seated, Mr. de Villeforte, who had drawn his chair beside him, began the discourse, by requesting, in very trim phraseology, to know to what good fortune he was indebted for the honor of receiving the visit of Mr. Lacourtelle.

"Why, as for that, Sir, I told your servant, who no doubt informed you, that I came here on business of very serious importance; and it may be called important, Mr. de Villeforte, when it relates to the honor and happiness of two respectable families, one of which, at least, has served its country through all her glorious struggles for liberty—whose citizens have —"

"Softly, softly, my dear Sir," said Mr. de Villefort, "I fancy the interests of our families do not now require a political discussion between us. Depend upon it I feel convinced that you are disposed to do every thing that becomes a man of integrity and moderation, in the rather delicate affair on which, if I mistake not, you are come here; for I think I do divine the motives of your visit."

"Then you might as well have said so at once, for there is nothing like plain, straight forward dealing in these cases, Mr. de Villeforte. The glorious revolution has taught us —"

"Pray do permit me, Mr. de Lacourtelle, to keep you rather more to the point of our immediate business. I dare say, now, it is this affair between Mademoiselle de Villeforte and your son, which has procured me this honor?"

"So so, then, your daughter has told you of her attachment to Lucien?"

"Mademoiselle de Villeforte has—lately—just now, in fact, Sir, given me some reason to understand—that is, I should say, to suspect that something may have imprudently passed——"

"Come, come, Mr. de Villeforte, it's very well to talk of imprudence at our age—but when I married my wife, and you first fell in with the old baroness——"

"Mr. Lacourtelle, those reminiscences are very foreign to the present question—the honor and the happiness of my daughter is now at stake, and it is that I must look to."

"I would not for the world that any thing *dishonorable* happened, Mr. de Villeforte, be assured of that—it was to prevent that, that I came to you so promptly ; for you know, when the young blood is up there is no answering for consequences."

"Very true, I confess it, that even birth and station are not strong enough to prevent women of family from sometimes suffering themselves to yield to the undignified weakness of nature—therefore the sooner matters are brought to a final close the better for all parties. You will agree with me, Mr. Lacourtelle, I am sure—you will allow that I have some reason to be sore on this business, although your son may be, and no doubt is, as indeed I have heard, a very fine young fellow. But in a case of this kind, where there is such wide difference of rank, the sooner such a matter is concluded on the best terms the better—but there cannot be much difficulty, Mr. Lacourtelle, I should hope."

"Why, no, indeed, Mr. de Villeforte, not much, as the fortune is all on one side."

"A significant hint?" thought Mr. de Villeforte ; and resuming the conversation, he said, "But then the object is to come to an arrangement at once. You and I know the world and understand each other—there is no use in mincing matters—it must be an off-hand business—so pray tell me, what sum in fact do you suppose your son would be satisfied with?"

Mr. Lacourtelle was astonished at the promptitude with which he was met at all points. He had not expected so much frankness on the part of the proud aristocrat ; but he took it for granted that Henriette's determination, as well as her independence, had silenced his objections, and he was determined not to be outdone in liberality. He therefore replied,

"I think, Sir, I may say safely on the part of Lucien, that he is above sordid considerations, and he will leave the money arrangements entirely to yourself and the young lady."

"Really, Mr. Lacourtelle," exclaimed Mr. de Villeforte, all his pride bristling up, "this is an indelicacy I scarcely expected from your opening observations. My daughter's honor could not allow her to be a party in such a compromise. To ensure her happiness, and the family honor, I will go any reasonable lengths, but I must repent my question as to the sum which I ought in fairness to be expected to give."

"Well then, let us see," said Mr. Lacourtelle ; "but before going one inch further, I must tell you that a great difficulty to an immediate settlement is my son's having been within the last hour actually drawn for the conscription."

"Difficulty !" exclaimed the other, starting up, and rubbed his hands with joy, "difficulty ! Why, what does the man mean ? A piece of unlooked for good news indeed !"

"I don't exactly understand this, Mr. de Villeforte," cried Mr. Lacourtelle, with a bewildered air: "the first thing you must do is to buy Lucien off."

"Buy him off! pack him off, you mean! me buy him off! What, then, Sir, do you suppose me to be fool enough to give money to bring him back, because I was willing to pay sharply for sending him away? Is this the way you would aid in saving my family from dishonor and my child from disgrace? By keeping this young fellow to prowl about here, with my money in his pocket, and a chance of seeing my daughter again, unless I choose to lock her up in a dark room on bread and water!"

"You put me beside myself," fiercely cried Mr. Lacourtelle rising: "what do you mean by all this? Do you now mean to say you will not consent to my son marrying your daughter?"

"Your son marry my daughter, Sir!" said Mr. de Villeforte, drawing himself up to the highest possible perpendicular stretch of consequence—"A de Villeforte marry a Lacourtelle! this is indeed too bad! Really I little thought nobility was *now* held in this tight—little expected that you could dream of such a proposition. I think, Sir, we may better separate," and with these words he rang the bell. A servant opened the door, and stood waiting for orders. Mr. Lacourtelle, utterly confounded by the turn things had taken, filled with despair at the failure of his almost certain expectations, and acknowledging, in spite of himself, a sort of respect for the proud carriage of the haughty noble, stood without power for a moment to move or speak.

From this situation of embarrassment and suffering he was released, though not relieved, by the sudden sounds of female lamentation in the loudest key of sorrow. It was Henriette's voice which pierced the mouldy walls of the old chateau, and sent shrill screams through the moth-eaten doors. The two fathers were roused from their respective inertness, and both were hurrying out of the room, when the servant who stood at the door was pushed violently forward against them, and Henriette came rearing in, with hysteric exclamations of wo, and flung herself alternately into Mr. Lacourtelle's arms and at her father's feet.

The baroness, Victorine, and Camille all followed her, the latter having been the cause of this new out-bursting of his sister's emotion, by having announced the intelligence of Lucien's fate. A scene of Babel-like confusion arose. Six of these chief actors, that is to say every one of them, spoke together, in all the various tones of supplication, exhortation and recrimination. High words arose between the fathers, each reproaching the other in terms which it was impossible for either to understand; the mother endeavored to command silence in the noisiest possible tone; the sister and brother flung their discordant peace offerings into the general chorus; and the servants, all called up by the contest added their mite to the common stock of disturbance, chattering, crying, laughing and swearing, according to their different sexes, dispositions, or household occupations.

In the midst of all these commingling elements of confusion, while

each was fixed with intense application upon its immediate object, and every one doing all that was possible for the defeat of their own purpose, in walking, with wondering eyes, inquiring ears, and open mouth, the unintentional and unconscious cause of the scene. This was Lucien himself. He had, after a snatched moment with Valerie, in which he told her of the certainty of his lot, set out in search of his father, whose movement towards the chateau he had learned at home. He was breathlessly anxious to stop, if possible, the measures his father was about to take with Mr. de Villeforte. He shrunk from an unnecessary exposure of Henriette's weakness, which she however gloried in displaying. He felt himself bound in honor to spare her if possible the mortification, which, even could his father succeed in his views with regard to her, must be the inevitable consequence of his own rejection of her, beautiful and rich and amiable as he acknowledged her to be.

He therefore pressed on to the chateau; and when he arrived there, and found all the gates and doors wide open and no servant to be seen, and heard the discordant sounds proceeding from the interior, in which the voices of his father and Henriette were so distinguishable, he did not hesitate to follow the impulse of his astonishment and curiosity, and he therefore walked unceremoniously into the room.

He remained for some moments unperceived, and too much amazed to know what measures to pursue. At length one pair of eyes were fixed on his fine figure, as he stood, with hands half raised and half outstretched, in an attitude of mixed benevolence and surprise—as if he would have calmed the tumult could he but have known the cause. The eyes which discovered him were Henriette's. She immediately uttered a wild scream of joy that silenced all the rest of the party, and she sprang away from the group into which they had hustled each other at the farthest end of the room, and was in an instant twisting tendril-like, round the neck and shoulders of Lucien.

The others immediately started after her along the floor, but seeing her safe sheltered, they gave up the chase, and all stood looking on, while Lucien loudly entrereated some explanation of the scene. Every throat instantly opened out again at one and the same time. Henriette claimed his protection, and swore that she was his forever and ever. Mr. Lacourteille attempted some explanation of what had passed; while Mr. de Villeforte and the baroness, discovering who Lucien was, flew at him as if to tear him to pieces.

"My sword, my sword!" cried the irritated aristocrat. "Let me revenge the honor of my house. This should be your work, Sir," continued he with a reproachful look at Camille, "but the very foundation of social order is split asunder—plebian dare to embrace our wives and daughters before our eyes, and our degenerate sons wink at the pollution. My sword, I say."

"Nay, nay, Sir, be appeased, I conjure you!" cried Lucien, with a loud voice, that *would* be heard. "You have nothing to dread, nothing to deplore—all will be right in a moment—I am the innocent cause of all this. It is quite a mistake from first to last. My own

father is as much in error as you are. I never dreamt, Mr. de Villeforte, of presuming to the honor of an alliance with your family. I admire, I esteem Mademoiselle de Villeforte beyond all expression; but I love another—I am irrevocably bound to another. Can I explain myself more fully. It is all a mistake."

"A mistake! another! admire! esteem! but not love me! What, Lucien, is it thus you would dare to thwart my mysterious doom that gave us to each other? Is this what you tell me?"

"Dearest Mademoiselle de Villeforte, this is no time for any thing but matter of fact realities. I have said the truth."

"Now, Mademoiselle de Villeforte," exclaimed her father, "what do you say to that? Are you sufficiently exposed? Am I enough disgraced? I recommend you to go and offer yourself next to me scullion boy, who is grinning younger at the exhibition you make. What will you do now, let me ask?"

Henriette seemed scarcely to have made up her mind to that. The window she thought was a couple of feet too high over the terrace, to allow of her throwing herself out with combined impunity and effect. She was afraid to trust the sharp points of her scissors for an innocent wound. She thought for a moment of a fainting fit—then of hysterics—and then—but, looking at the stern reality of Lucien's face, she could not continue the scene, so she determined on a speedy retreat, and uttering a convulsive exclamation, between laughing and crying, a very pretty imitation of a nervous cough, she fled from the room, tearing her hair and wringing her hands. Her mother, sister, brother, and all the servants pursued her in full cry, and they just caught her in good time, as she was going, or pretending to be going, to throw herself over the banisters of the kitchen-stairs.

Lucien, left alone with his father and Mr. de Villeforte, thought it necessary to say a few explanatory and decisive words. He therefore, with an air that commanded attention, told the fact that had the whole possessions of the De Villefortes, and the inheritance of all their fame been offered to him, on condition of marrying Henriette, he would not have accepted it; and that he was determined, and that no earthly consideration could stop him, to follow the career he felt his whole happiness to depend on. "Twice drawn for a soldier," said he, "I either now fulfil my duty, or I shall not be a living man to-morrow."

These emphatic words were accompanied by an expression, never before observed in Lucien's looks and which seemed to penetrate his father's heart.

"Come, come along, my child," cried he, "the wealth of the world would not make me thwart you more."

They left the chateau together abruptly, and neither spoke a word till they reached their home.

CHAPTER XII.

The day passed over in painful despondency. The little which there was of conversation was troubled and in snatches. Brief explanations of feelings, which he himself imperfectly understood, were attempted by Lucien, to account to his father for that boundless and uncontrollable passion which urged him away; and the father saw that it was a fate less limited than that relating to a conscription list which had doomed his son to be a soldier. He bore the shock occasioned by the whole morning's disappointments with as much fortitude as he could command; and he was probably supported under it by an involuntary feeling of reliance upon Isambert, and a conviction that his sentiments towards Valerie were such as might lead to his becoming to him almost a second son.

Valerie was not seen out of her own room during the day. She was busily occupied in the service of Lucien, superintending the preparation of some of his scanty wardrobe, and, as she had done before, arranging with her own hands the soldier's knapsack. But no tear fell this time on its contents. She knew he was to set off on the morrow, for not a day more could be spared to the conscript's. The grand army was actually on its march, and all the new raised levies had the strictest orders to follow it without the respite of an hour. Valerie knew all this, yet she could not shed a tear. Lucien was much with her. He had, however, a good deal of time to give to his father, and much to say to him, of consolation, and much to listen to of affectionate solicitude. But he was not, in such a moment, overloaded with *advice*. His father had discretion enough to know that it is not in the season of the heart's fulness that the mind of youth is fit to sympathize with precepts of morality and prudence. He trusted to the hereafter of reflection to ripen the fruits of his son's early imbibed principles of independence and honor, and he left his career to Providence and his own sense of right. He was astonished at Lucien's calm but firm avowal of his attachment to his cousin. He had never suspected such a thing. It seemed almost out of the course of reason and nature—because he had not been privy to it. Yet that it could have existed at all, did not appear so wonderful as that it had existed without his knowledge; and he was more disposed to believe it a new-formed notion of Lucien, arising from his agitated sensibility a parting from Valerie, than an old and well founded sentiment, nurtured from the cradle and to be forgotten only in the grave. He therefore opposed neither remonstrance nor persuasion to stop the current of his son's profession of faith, but his mind secretly and involuntarily turned towards Isambert, whenever Lucien spoke of Valerie's attachment; and in the same way a connecting link seemed to unite Henriette to every mention of Lucien's own passion. This he felt to be the proper order of things, and thus in his own mind he *would* have it.

The dinner was cheerless although the cheer was good; the hearts

of father and son were fuller than their glasses; and nothing but Mr. Lacourtelle's urgent entreaties could have induced Isambert to continue his visit during this last day of his friend's domestic unity. He felt himself to be an intruder in his own despite; and as Valerie was not present, he saw nothing that could make him forget realities, with the self-willed perverseness which blinded him to them when she was there. Determined at length to remove all obstructions to the confidential communication which he knew must be desirable, on this last evening, between father and son, he made some pretext for quitting the room; and taking up his hat in the passage, he walked from the house, and proceeded for some time at a rapid pace, in order to avoid a recall, and without at all calculating his path. He was rather surprised to find, after a short time, that he was within sight of the Chateau de Villefort, having unconsciously followed the track which he had gone the preceding evening with Valerie and Henriette. He had not on that occasion approached closer to the chateau than the entrance of a back avenue, which led up to the farm yard and so to the offices of the mansion. He and Valerie had there parted with Henriette, and he thought he could not do better, for his present hour or two of disposable time, than to lounge about the grounds of this ancient place, his mind being much filled with speculations on the characters of the various members of the family, whose conduct of that morning Mr. Lacourtelle had sketched to him.

He found full employment for his moralizing mood, in gazing on these relics of former grandeur and importance, and mentally tracing their gradual decay, through the various revolutions which time or man had effected. Evening was coming fast on in its shadowy indistinctness, and Isambert continued to pace to and fro in large long alleys of elms and oaks, emerging at times from their gloom and walking in the open places of the park, his mind filled with thoughts of the past, and his heart with hopes of the future. Suddenly, as he raised his eyes, and cast his glances in the direction of an old and uncleaned fish-pond, which he had a few minutes before passed close to, he observed two female figures pacing the weed-covered circular walk which was close to its edge. One of them displayed great agitation, and the other seemed to argue with, and dissuade her from some desperate design. Isambert paused a moment. He quickly recognized the graceful form of Henriette de Villefort, and he soon conjectured that it was her sister who accompanied her. He called to mind Mr. Lacourtelle's account of the morning's scene, and from that friendly interpreter of Henriette's words and conduct, he had had a most touching description of her despair. His own impression, the evening before, had been highly favorable to this interesting girl, and he had heard nothing that had not tended to strengthen it. He had seen plainly her strong attachment to Lucien, but he had had no whisper of its extravagance; and, as he gazed on her now, he shuddered lest she might contemplate some violent end to what he had no doubt was most serious suffering.

He therefore lost no time in repairing close to the spot where she and her companion stood. He stole through a shrubbery which came close to one side of the pond, and he placed himself as near the edge

of the plantation as would allow of his observing the movements of the sisters, without being, as he thought, seen by them. Although not, like some people, a listener on principle, or rather from the want of it, he thought this was an occasion which justified even that means of ascertaining the intention of the lovely young person, in whose wild looks and passionate gestures he saw the incipient germs of a *felo de ss*. He thus caught the following sentiments of colloquial information:

"What then, Victorine, you *do* refuse me?—You are not then alive to the deep insult on our family honor, which calls for more than my life in expiation! Oh, Heavens, do I yet live to hear a De Villeforte say she could witness her sister's disgrace, and survive it! You will not drown yourself with me?"

"Indeed, Henriette, I don't see why I should drown myself because you are crossed in love."

"And you refuse to fling yourself from the top of the pigeon house, which once was the tower where the Guaité called our ancestor's serfs to battle, to avenge the honor of our name?"

"Henriette, I positively will not do it. So there is no use in asking me."

"Then let me alone wipe out the stain! Let me immolate myself, nor survive the burning degradation!"

And with these words, uttered at the very highest note on her voice, Henriette flung herself bodily into the fish-pond. Victorine screamed with all her might, while Isambert, rushing through the brambles, was in a moment at the edge, and in another, by an active jump, he gained the middle of the thickly clotted weeds and duck-meat that covered the stagnant water.

He sank in the mud about half leg high, and immediately stooped to raise up Henriette, who had risen on her knees, and was in the attitude of a mermaid, wringing the green tat of the fish-pond out of her hair. Isambert's agitation prevented his instantaneously seeing the safety of the make-believe suicide, so he dragged her very unceremoniously through the mud and on the bank. She, of course, in a moment recovered her insensibility, dropped her head and hands, and showed no appearance of life; and Victorine (the confidant, but not the accomplice) thought she could do no less than faint away as well. She, therefore, dropped down upon the grass, to the woful embarrassment of Isambert, who, afraid to leave her by herself, was obliged to take her up under one arm, while he carefully threw Henriette across his shoulder; and, bearing this double load of beauty and absurdity, he made his way as fast as he could across the park and up to the chateau.

He was met half way by the whole family, running out in the greatest alarm to look for the sisters, who had stolen away unperceived; and he had to encounter a mixture of wailing and inquiry, and resuscitation, and bareforn, and sal-volatile, in such quantities as I do not care to enter on a detail of. Victorine soon recovered her understanding, and stood firmly on her legs; but nothing could succeed in bringing Henriette to herself, until (to assuage the baroness's despair) the cook proposed to bleed her in the jugular vein

with a large and sharp-pointed iron skewer—"and on that hint she spake."

Her first words were incoherent, as all parts of speech should be in such a case. Her first *thoughts*—will the reader believe it? were absolutely those of good sense and propriety. The whole process of her mind (as she herself attempted to describe it) had been one of wild and most extravagant confusion. The machinery had all gone wrong, the unriveted wheels spun round with the unimaginable speed of those of Phœbus's chariot, and the loosened chain of reasonable thought had run, whirling along, till it suddenly came to the click which stopped the whole; and something, she could not tell what, seemed to strike against her sensorium, with the force of the clapper of the belfrey clock—which, in one of its disorganized fits, had furnished Henriette with this whole illustration.

But the fact was, that the process of decomposition had commenced with her absurdity sooner than she thought, for it was when Lucien had renounced her love that her eyes began to open to the light. Still she could not, all at once, return to her senses. She persisted, during the whole day, to continue the deception on herself as well as others. She would not eat a morsel, although her usual healthy appetite called out for food; she rubbed her eyes into a state of inflammation, though not a tear was starting, and she heaved her beautiful bosom with forced aspirations, that were less like legitimate sighs than the wheezings of an air-pump. As evening approached, she naturally became cooler, and she might have subsided before bedtime into a very moderate state of rationality, had she not perceived, from the windows of the chateau, the figure of a man, lurking about the grounds, which, in the imperfect light, she could not recognize, but wished to take for that of Lucien. She made herself almost sure that it was he, in a fit of remorse for his morning's rejection of her love, wandering in hopes of catching a glimpse of her, and perhaps of pouring out some propitiatory explanation or retraction. But she, on the instant, resolved to read him a great lesson, and wishing also to produce a sublime effect on Victorine, she declared her determination to go instantly and drown herself in the water, running as she little thought, the much more likely risk of smothering herself in the mud. Victorine followed her hurried flight towards the fishpond; and there, on its banks, did Henriette commence her preparatory attitudes to attract the observation of him whom she believed to be Lucien, and those high-flown appeals to Victorine's sympathetic desperation, which she thought would at least produce a powerful effect on the listener, if they did not prevail on her sister to share the ducking she meant to submit to, for she knew well that the nearly dried up pond was of no dangerous depth.

The result has been described, but nothing could sufficiently express Henriett's mingled astonishment and shame at all these her scandalous proceedings, when the burst of returning propriety broke upon her brain, in the manner already mentioned. She was gradually preparing for this from the moment Lucien had so plainly avowed his own passion and disowned her's. When, to her amazement, she saw Isambert instead of Lucien in the pond beside her, and dragging

her out of the mud, she was electrified by the disappointment first, and then by shame of his witnessing the scene, and fear of his suspecting her sham despair. The same feelings were working as she lay on his shoulder from the pond to the chateau. But it was not until she was fairly deposited by him in safety within the chateau walls, that the vapors of romantic delusion were really dispelled, and Henriette became suddenly sensible to the whole absurdity of her conduct, and felt a glow of natural shame suffusing her mud-covered cheeks and bosom. Following the impulse of her consciousness and self-reproach, she hastily sought her own apartment.

Mr. de Villeforte and the baroness loaded Isambert with thanks and praise; and while he retired to disencumber himself of the mud and his wet clothes, the agitated mother went off to assist in the ablutions necessary for the purification of Henriette. Mr. de Villeforte very soon rejoined his daughter's preserver (or more correctly her picker up,) and to inquiries of his name added warm assurances of gratitude, and a pressing invitation that he would take up his night's quarters at the chateau. This, however, Isambert declined; promised to call the next morning to inquire after the young ladies, and took his leave prudently abstaining from all mention of the Lacourtelles, a name not likely to have given any higher flavor to the very savory feelings of regard which he had already inspired. And while he turned his back upon the scene of this strange adventure, running over in his mind the rapid incidents, which though so recent appeared scarcely real, she who had been the heroine of the adventure lay in her bed, where her mother had even her placed, not sleeping away the fatigue of all these artificial excitements, but deeply cogitating upon the whole course of her conduct, and the train of her feelings for several weeks past.

She now saw clearly, and she no longer wished to reject the truth, that she had not in reality loved Lucien Lacourtelles. She felt that the spurious kind of attachment she had worked herself up to, was as flimsy as it was factitious. Founded on the worst principles of romantic mysticism, it had nothing better to support it than her admiration of Lucien's handsome person, and her determination to have a lover. But nothing had occurred to give consistency to her fancy. Lucien and she had no feelings of real sympathy. He was almost wholly uncultivated, while it was overdone refinement that led her into such excesses of sentimental foolery. Neither had he put forward any of the means which are so essential, and which so rarely fail to gain a woman's love. The persevering assiduities; the adaptation of manner; the careful watching of every look; the ready ear for every word; the ardor in wooing; and the marked determination to win—these are alone the ways to the female heart. They would melt any woman but one of marble—and Pygmalion is a proof that there is a way to even that. But none of these methods were taken by Lucien; and Henriette discovered, therefore, that she was really indifferent to him, just as she had wrought herself into the notion that she was madly in love.

In the twilight solitude of her bed-room, she frankly acknowledged her discovery—to herself; but from some lingering weakness of her

nature, she half thought it necessary to make a transfer of her affection, or rather really to create an affection in herself for another; for the heart of woman, like nature, of which it should be an epitome, mortally abhors a vacuum. Henriette's self-learned lesson was not thrown away. She did not rush into any nonsensical passion for Isambert, because he had lugged her out of the mud, or from any of the fantastic incitements to her affair with Lucien. But she was greatly pleased with the manly, plain and steady tenor of his conduct, and she recollected more of his manner the preceding evening than she had noticed at the time; and moreover she dwelt, and pleasedly, upon all she had heard from Valerie of his previous transactions relative to the conscription, and of the events of his military career, as detailed in his letter to Mr. Lacourteille. In short, Henriette at last, worn out by her exertions and excitement, began to doze quietly away, with a notion that it was but common gratitude to her preserver that she should fall asleep in the pleasantest possible reflections relative to him.

When Isambert reached Mr. Lacourteille's, the moon was just rising, and faintly lighting the rural and placid scene. He distinguished his friendly host pacing with a measured step before the door on the little lawn; and, joining in his walk, he abstained from any detail of what had passed at the chateau, and entered into the conversation by which Mr. Lacourteille strove to beguile his thoughts during the absence of Lucien and Valerie, who had wandered off together in some of the moonlit paths.

Valerie had been incessantly employed during the day in the manner already mentioned, and Lucien had divided his time in the way most likely to soothe her, and cheer his father's spirits. The latter was the more difficult task of the two, for he found his father to sink more and more as the hour of separation approached, while the gentle and timid girl, who was going to suffer the most cruel affliction that could befall her, seemed every moment to gain new power to meet the evil from which she found it was in vain to fly. This true courage of reflection is most often found in women, who make up by it for their constitutional deficiency in the brute bravery which men more frequently display. Valerie seemed to rise above all weakness; and her calm deportment fitted Lucien with a solemn sentiment of respect that was still a novelty in his feelings for her.

Her work completed, his knapsack arranged, the night fairly set in, she sat down, fatigued and with a pensive air, by the open window of her bed-room which looked out on the garden, whence she saw the red moon slowly rising, and throwing its shadowy lustre on the fields and shrubberies. Lucien stood beside her, leaning tenderly towards her, but without speaking. She looked up to his face, and the expression of deep sorrow which clouded it for a moment almost brought a return of all the former emotions which she had been contending against so long.

"Let us walk, Lucien," said she, rising, and taking his hand in hers; "the air will refresh me, and I feel cramped from being so long in this little room. See that there is no one in the drawing-room—Mr. Duflos may have returned."

Lucien stepped into the drawing-room, adjoining Valerie's chamber and finding that no one was there, he called her out; and, Valerie throwing a shawl over her shoulders, they passed into the garden, and in the direction of the copsewood formerly mentioned, through which lay the direct path to Flixecourt. Just as they entered into this little grove they perceived Isambert on his return from the chateau, and saw him join Mr. Lacourtelles on the lawn. Lucien had till that moment had his thoughts wholly fixed on Valerie, and he was silently picturing to himself the life of loneliness which she was about to lead during his absence. A momentary doubt even passed his mind as to his right of inflicting this long wretchedness upon her for the gratification of his own vanity and ambition. But it was now too late to think of sacrificing their indulgence, and he was shaking off the harassing reproach, when Isambert caught his view. The electrical chain of thought was touched, and its thousand links seemed to vibrate at once. Associations crowded upon Lucien. He knew not how to separate nor to define them. "Can this be jealousy?" asked he of himself. "This hurried rush of sensation is quite new to me. I never liked this man—he has taken precedence of me, and in spite of me, whenever we have come together. Is he then superior to me? Not, certainly, in personal advantages. But when I am gone—when absence throws its veil across my looks—when he is here, alone, to follow her up—for I know he loves her—may she not change? May she not find him superior, if indeed he is so? It is too late now—I must run the risk—but could I not bind her by some solemn pledge?" Such did Lucien almost immediately acknowledge to be the sum of his passing fears and fancies. She saw his agitation in its silent workings. She implored him to speak out his thoughts with candor, on this last night of their being together, perhaps for years—perhaps for ever. He could not resist her entreaties; and half cursing the weakness or the force of his attachment—for he knew not which it was that made him for a moment doubt her—he confessed to her that he should feel more at ease, or rather less uneasy, if before they parted, some mutual pledge was passed between them.

"A pledge, Lucien!" said she, reproachfully, "what pledge can I give you stronger than I have already given? Do you not possess my whole heart? Are you not sure of that?"

"Yes, dearest Valerie, I know you love me now, and I am sure you always will. Yet when I think of absence, of time, those terrible enemies of affection——"

"Oh, do not speak so, Lucien! I should hate myself indeed if I thought you believed me capable of change, or within the possible reach of caprice."

"No, nor do I Valerie. It is not exactly change I dread, nor caprice neither—nothing, in short, proceeding from yourself. But—in fact, I do not well know what apprehension haunts me—but if while I was away, another might love you, might persuade you to love him, without exactly forgetting me! if, in short, any one was to gain ever so slight a footing in that heart that should be wholly, exclusively mine—the very imagination of it sets me mad even now!"

"Oh, Lucien, have no such fear. Do, my dearest friend, my lover, my husband---I can find no words strong enough to express what I consider you to me---do think worthily of me and of yourself. Your doubts are alike dishonoring to us both, but I know they are the excess of love, and therefore I forgive them. For whom, Lucien, could I forget you, or who could I love with you? I have no fears for you. I see you go into the wide world, far, far from me---to all the temptations of beauty and variety---but I do not fear you, to whom could I give the least portion of the heart that is yours and yours only?"

The name of Isambert was on his lips; but he could not at first utter it. Still he found it impossible at such a time to maintain a forced reserve, and he thought it more manly, and more truly affectionate, to confess his own weakness, than to leave Valerie in doubt, and part from her with an untold suspicion lurking in his breast. He therefore repeated to her the reflections that had been passing in his mind, and confessed his fears that Isambert would, during his absence, attempt to gain her affections, or at least, to excite her to listen to the avowal of his. Valerie heard him with surprise. At another time, a feeling of pleasure might have mixed with it; for she held Isambert's character and conduct in the highest esteem, and the notion that he loved her was, to her own individual feelings, highly gratifying. But when she viewed such a composition as a violation of the sanctity in which she considered her attachment to Lucien, she shrunk shocked from the very thought of Isambert's possible affection, and she then felt as anxious as Lucien was to seal their plighted fidelity by some sacred promise, which both the heart and conscience would preserve from violation.

During this conversation they had passed by the village of Flinco-court, and crossed the high road southward of the town, and were following the path that led by the church, and through the little suburb, of which the reader may recollect the description in the opening chapter. When Lucien's impassioned avowal of his fears was just at its height, and Valerie's sympathy with him had led her to the result just mentioned, they both at once perceived that they were actually close to the church, the small side door of which was open, for the admission of such penitents as chose the evening hour for the putting up their silent prayers.

"Oh, God!" exclaimed Lucien, with strong emotion, and straining Valerie in his arms, "that I cannot now enter here with you, and in the sight of Heaven and man secure you mine for ever! That obstacles should exist to this, in the odious protractions of the law, and in the infamous restrictions of what they call religion! I must part with you, unaffiliated, unattached but in heart, and at the mercy of a thousand contingencies. Perhaps, ere another moon may shine upon this sacred edifice, in spite of all your present feelings, and my adoring confidence, uncontrollable circumstances may arise---unlooked for changes of the heart---unparalleled, unprecedented causes---to make you enter this very church, the bride of another!"

Lucien shook with emotion as he thus exclaimed, and Valerie either thrilled from her own or from the force of his. She felt ter-

rified at the pictured probability which he had traced, and but one wish engrossed her. It was to satisfy him, and bind herself. To accomplish this by the most solemn means within her power was her next thought—and full of this ardent desire, she cried.

"Here then, Lucien, let us enter here! The open door seems to invite us—the solitude, the secrecy, the solemnity of the place and hour suit an occasion so holy as this. I could not now become your wife, till forms and dispensations are procured, for which an age might as well be required as the time which we cannot now command. But the altar is open to us. The eye of Heaven will witness our vows. The holy spirit of love will dictate our contract, and I shall be your own, your fast bound bride, as securely and as sacredly, as if priests and magistrates had sworn me yours, with all the rites of religion and law. Come in, come in, and be satisfied."

She led him towards the church-door, and they entered together. All was still and silent. Not one pious soul was there to disturb the solemn scene. A lamp hung dimly burning before a shrine. It seemed to invite the lovers to solemnize their purpose there. Thither they moved, and knelt together on the steps of the altar; and there, in deep and not unhallowed fervor, they pledged their vows of everlasting love and faith.

"Never, so help me Heaven," exclaimed Lucien concluding his engagement, "will I marry another—never bend in plighted union at another altar, till you are joined with and sanctify the pledge."

"And all the saints be witness," murmured Valerie, "that but for you no vow shall ever pass my lips—no man but you receive my faith and troth—never, never!"

The echoes of the church whispered a repetition of these words—but no mortal voice returned them—and no glance but that of Heaven itself fell on the lovers, as they rose from their knees and slowly retired into the open air. As they quitted the church, Lucien stopped for a moment. He cast one look deep into the misty aisles, and assured himself that no prying eye had marked the scene. He then folded Valerie once more in his arms, and passionately pressing his lips to hers he exclaimed,

"Now, I have nothing to require. You are mine, irrevocably and for ever. Henceforward, I exist doubly in you and in myself. Absence has now no terrors for me. I shall be with you, even though absent—shrined in your heart. Now indeed I glory in being a conscript, for Valerie is-a conscript's bride!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Within two months from the evening which witnessed the scene described in the last chapter, Lucien Lacourteille had joined the grand army on its march through Poland, and had actually entered on his duties as a soldier, in one of the regiments of lancers in the division under the command of Prince Eugene. When he, among others of the conscripts, arrived at the head-quarters, and was about to be appointed to a particular corps, he saw, among other officers who inspected the new levies, the prince to whom he had been indebted for admission to the review of the garrison of Amiens. He inquired his name, and found him to be no other than Eugene Beauharnois. He immediately presented himself, adverted to the Amiens adventure, and addressed a personal request that he might serve under Eugene's orders. He was as quickly recognised, his petition granted, and himself nominated to one of the most distinguished regiments, with a certainty of being during the whole campaign, under the actual orders of one of the bravest and best of Napoleon's generals. Thus pleased, he had the first object of his ambition gratified. He was on the road to distinction and success, and his fate seemed now in his own hands. He asked no more. He instantly applied himself, with all the earnest activity of his nature, to the duties assigned him. The drill sergeant had not much trouble in compelling the soldier, which nature had sent nearly ready made into his hands; and Lucien was ere long noted by the prince himself as one of the most forward and promising youths in the army.

A series of letters was regularly despatched by Lucien, and for some months as regularly received, detailing to the much loved objects from whom he was separated, the course of events connected with his individual services, and with the military operations in which he was an actor. But this correspondence, the delight of Lucien's hours of repose, was interrupted, as the triumphant advance of the army led to a rapid succession of actions, with all their usual concomitants of privation, hardship, and fatigue. Several of his hurried letters were lost, and the few which reached home contained warm and reiterated entreaties that his father and Valerie would attribute to the true cause the apparent neglect to which he felt his irregularity might be ascribed.

Lucien wrote in the spirit and energy of a soldier—to his father; and in the passionate tenderness of a lover—to Valerie. His personal details were mixed up in his correspondence with the assurances of unbounded attachment as a son and a husband—for it was in the latter light he persisted to consider himself to Valerie.

He mentioned with enthusiasm the affairs which he witnessed and shared in, and proved that they were all victories, even when that fact was questioned by the victors. He told of his own hopes of promotion, of his escapes from all serious injury, having only received during the campaign one or two slight scratches; and his account of

the doubtful and murderous battle of Borodino, ended with the glowing anticipation of his soon marching in triumph into the sacred city of the Czars. He wrote once more, to tell that tale of glory. His last letter was de-patched from Moscow, the very day that the army entered its gates, in all the pomp and pride of conquest.

From the hour of separation with Lucien, Valerie conducted herself as became the character, of which I have endeavored to give a faint idea to the reader. Of the separation itself I have not chosen to attempt a detail. The facts attending on Lucien's departure, and Valerie's distress were but scanty materials for description. They have occurred, with various modifications, to almost all who have loved and parted. It is the *feelings* alone that may be traced with any hope of effect; but in sketching what took place on Lucien's first threatened absence from home, I told pretty nearly the tale of what Valerie suffered when the real separation came. For it is scarcely the actual moment of parting that is the period of most feeling. It is the previous hours or days of preparation for the event that try the heart with agitation and nearly make it break with anguish. When the mind is made up to the inevitable evil, and hope has no resting place, sensation itself for awhile seems dead, and the object is far away before we feel it to be really gone. When that drear conviction came home to Valerie, and she awoke to the feeling of her desolateness, she did not lie down under the affliction, but exerted every energy of intellect to bear up, as became the chosen and affianced bride of him whom she at once deplored and deoted on. She felt as if his bold spirit had infused a portion of its daring into hers, and as if her affection was to be shown worthy of its object, by force as well as depth. So completely did she suppress all evidence of weakness, and exert herself to supply Lucien's place, in many domestic matters in which she had never before interferred, that her uncle, following his wishes as much as his reasonings, could not believe her to be very deeply distressed, and thought it after all possible that Isambert's evident attachment was soothing her for Lucien's absence.

Isambert was a frequent visitor, and his great regard was evident not only for Valerie, but to her. He displayed in a thousand ways a tender and delicate feeling towards her—but he never spoke of love, nor gave her an instant's cause of alarm on the subject of Lucien's apprehensions. From the day on which her lover left her, she had no opportunity of displaying her fidelity, except in the silent indulgence of her passion—but nothing on the part of Isambert put her constancy to the test, and she continued to receive him with the same cordial esteem and growing regard, which had all along marked her sentiments and distinguished her conduct.

Isambert knew full well from Mr. Lacourtelle's information, that Lucien had declined Henriette de Villeforte's affection, from his avowed attachment to his cousin. Mr. Lacourtelle, in broadly confessing his own views on all the bearings of the subject, made light of this boyish fancy of his son, and pronounced it contrary to all natural, and rational, and ecclesiastical rule. He declared himself

quite unable to conceive the possibility of a man falling in love with his first cousin, unless she had a large fortune, or in some such spirit-stirring contingency: but he quite scouted the notion of a fancy of the kind standing the test of six months' absence, or hearing the brunt of his opposition. He therefore encouraged Isambert to all possible diligence in making his approaches to Valerie's regard, and expressed his firm reliance on Lucien's safe return after a while with sufficient experience in the art of war to enable him to open the trenches once more against Mademoiselle de Villeforte, and carry her person, heart, and fortune, either by sap or storm, as might be most convenient.

Isambert listened to all Mr. Lacourte's suggestions; but if he acted on them it was in such a way as neither satisfied his impatience nor alarmed Valerie's reserve. Isambert saw clearly that she did love her absent cousin, and he had no doubt of the passion being mutual. He was prudent rather than passionate, and he knew that an abrupt avowal of the attachment which he truly felt for Valerie would have shocked her delicacy and ruined his hopes. He calculated on many chances lessening, if not removing, the obstacles which lay in his way. If he did not actually speculate on Lucien's possible death, in the terrific contest to which he was exposed, he would not perhaps, divest himself of the notion that such an event was possible. But, as he did not wish to go too deeply into the nature of his own sensations, neither must we, being content with the fact that he continued his steady and unchanging course of intimate and friendly visiting, without once startling Valerie's fears or committing his own feelings.

Isambert was also, during all this time, a frequent guest at the Chateau de Villeforte, where he had made for himself a footing of considerable intimacy. Circumstances, not now to be revealed, had given him a consideration in Mr. de Villeforte's eyes, infinitely greater than that arising from his being the preserver of his daughter, for any country bumpkin might have been so, and plebeian services of any extent had no value in his estimation. Isambert was gradually becoming a great favorite with the whole family; and, from what has been already told, the reader will be prepared to learn that Henriette was, day after day, forming a sincere and rational attachment for her new friend; but totally unencouraged by him, for he never felt or professed any thing beyond sentiments of friendship, founded on admiration of her beauty and talents, and esteem for the whole tenor of her conduct and manners, which he thought exemplary after the severe trial of the heart which he believed her to have suffered. Her affair with Lucien had taught her the danger and disgrace attendant on the unmeasured conduct she then pursued, and she was resolved, on this occasion, to risk no such repetition.—Victorine and Camille ran the usual course of their unimportant occupations and amusements; the zeal with which they formerly followed their elder sister's wild example being moderated in proportion to her present calmness, and both of them, as well as the baroness, giving their full share of intimacy to Isambert, who was in the highest possible favor with all parties.

From the time of Lucien's departure, Mr. de Villeforte and his spouse had been gradually softening in their inveteracy to the very name of Lacourteille. They were not bad hearted people, though their pride often gave them the appearance of being so; and they listened by degrees to Isambert's cautious and conciliatory remonstrances, till at length they gave their full consent to a renewal of the visiting between Valerie and their young people, and an intercourse of a most warm and friendly nature was perfectly established between them. This was to Valerie in every way an advantage. From the accomplishments of her friends, she acquired many a hint for her own improvement, and in their refined and now rational society she felt a relief from many a painful thought. By tacit consent Lucien's name was never mentioned—but the secret echoing of Valerie's heart prevented its ever being hushed.

Thus did affairs go on, till the time of the receipt of Lucien's letter giving an account of his entrance into the Russian capital. From that period, gloom and doubt and sorrow came thickly upon our heroine's heart. The news of the burning and of the abandonment of Moscow stole in faint whisperings over France, like a noxious yet invisible mildew, blighting the promise of the land. France had been raised to an elevation of unbounded transport by the triumphant progress of the emperor and the army. The whole world seemed subdued; and the first bulletin, dated from the Kremlin, realized the hopes of the most unlimited enthusiasts. The fall from this point of exultation was to instant and inevitable despair. Day after day brought the woful intelligence of retreat, and wretchedness, and ruin; and at last, the return of the lone and crest-fallen chief set the seal upon the fiat of destruction which fate had issued against the mighty host he had marched with. Regular returns of casualties were vainly demanded by the nation. Thousands of anguished families clamored forth unanswered calls for their sons, their brothers, and their husbands. Whether death in some of its various shapes of horror had made them its prey, or captivity bound them in chains, few, very few, could ascertain. Entire cohorts were lost and unaccounted for. Soldiers and chiefs had perished in a break and desolate obscurity. The ruin of the whole had been alike prompt and mysterious.

One point alone was ascertained in reference to Lucien Lacourteille: he had not returned to France with the skeleton remnant of the army. He had disappeared, no one knew how; but every probability—a million chances to one—seemed to say that he was no more. But while inquiry had one nook into which to pry, or hope even a shadow to grasp at, Mr. Lacourteille continued to inquire and to hope. At length, however, he abandoned his fruitless attempts, and he was convinced that Lucien had shared the fate of the hundreds of thousands who had fallen by the frost, by famine, or the sword. Mr. Lacourteille felt more even than he himself expected, at this drear conviction being confirmed in his mind. He mourned his only child with manly weakness; and he would have sunk utterly under the affliction, had not his growing affection for Isambert, and his new certain expectation that he would become Valerie's husband, saved him from complete despondency.

How Isambert's mind and heart were acted on or agitated, I must leave the reader to conjecture, as I myself was left.

But Valerie? How did she bear up against the agonizing uncertainty? With an unvaried, unflinching belief that Lucien still lived—and a firm expectation that he would one day return! Love is sometimes an inspiration, and sometimes a delusion. We shall presently see which it was, in the instance before us.

Valerie did not despair—did not even doubt—but she suffered probably more than if she had. Her mind was in a perpetual ferment of nervous expectation. Every day brought the hope of an arrival, either of intelligence of Lucien, or of himself. Her uncle and her friends felt it a duty to remove, if possible, this fevered and anxious reliance on what they deemed impossible. They now dreaded the actual confirmation of their belief in Lucien's death, more on Valerie's account than his, whom they were convinced was out of the reach of further suffering. For her, they apprehended the shock with the worst anticipations—and they ceased all efforts at inquiry for fear of receiving a decisive confirmation. Mr. Lacourteille had but one object now in view—Valerie's marriage with Isambert. He talked freely on the subject with him; and the latter made no scruple of discussing the means of attaining the object on which he confessed his happiness depended. Mr. Lacourteille consequently turned on all occasions to the mention of Isambert, with the warmest affection, and at length threw out such plain suggestions as left Valerie no doubt of the views which she had all along suspected. But this caused her no concern. She did not interrupt her uncle's speculations—and was indifferent to them, as long as Isambert made himself no party in them. He had not as yet ever ventured one word beyond what was consistent with the tender friendship, which she saw and was happy to believe he had for her. But at length he spoke out more plainly.

Isambert had waited more than the amplest term which expectancy could with any rational pretence have dictated. But he found, at length, that his happiness was frittered away, and Valerie's very health impaired in a fruitless delay, which had exceeded the utmost bounds that delicacy or decorum could prescribe. He resolved to avow his passion, and at once to demand the reward of years of fond and unceasing attachment. He balanced long before he decided on this final step, and when he had resolved on taking it, the means to employ, the words to use in preferring his suit, became a new source of embarrassment and difficulty. Accident at length, the lover's readiest friend, gave him an opportunity of speaking his mind.

Mr. Lacourteille was now once more entering with his accustomed vigor upon the management of his farm, which nearly a year of hopeless sorrow had led him totally to neglect; and in the too great exertion of some bodily effort, he had the misfortune to fracture an arm. Isambert was happily at the house, on one of his frequent visits, and to him the afflicted workmen ran with the news of their master's mishap.

When the first messenger came to him, he was sitting in the little drawing room with Valerie, and this sad interruption to their conversa-

tion threw her into agitation. The man told his short tale, and hastened away in search of the village surgeon; Isambert was rushing out to the relief of his wounded friend, when he observed that Valerie was almost fainting, from the alarm thus suddenly, excited. She was much changed of late: even trifles had the power of affecting her, more than important events could formerly have done; and her nervous apprehension magnified her uncle's accident into somewhat much worse even than it really was.

"My dear Valerie," said Isambert soothingly, "there is no need for this alarm. This accident though severe, can be by no means dangerous."

"Alas, alas! Every thing is now a matter of alarm to me. Unprotected and helpless as I shall be without my uncle's care, what will become of me!"

The accent of forlorn distress in which these words were uttered, struck upon Isambert's heart. At that instant, ill-timed as it was, unfeeling towards the sufferings of his friend as it might appear, unthought of, and unreckoned on—at that instant Isambert felt irresistibly impelled to prefer the declaration of love which had been so long suppressed, and which had resisted a hundred fitting occasions of development.

"No, Valerie, no," cried he. "you are not helpless, not unprotected. Let what may happen to all the world beside, I am your support and solace, if you will permit me. Even now I must tell it—I cannot, if the fate of the world was at stake, longer delay the avowal—I love you, you alone, with unutterable fervor. Look here," added he, taking from his breast a locket with a piece of Valerie's own hair, "here is the token, which I have so long worn upon my heart, that you, and you alone are dear to me. This braid of hair, steeped in your tears discovered in the knapsack, which I received from you the first day I marched as a soldier, has never left its place there where you should reign. I know not what I have said—I am hurried away beyond myself—this is no time, I feel it to be wrong.—Forgive me, Valerie, but I have spoken, and now you know! I fly to assist your uncle.—For God's sake forgive me this abrupt avowal—but I was not my own master, your sorrow quite overcame me. All will be well—have no fears!"

With these words, he kissed her hands fervently, and rushed from the room. Valerie was unable to stir or almost to think. This wild and ill-timed avowal of love, so unlike Isambert's usual steady and well-poised demeanor, mixed with the shock at the news of her uncle's accident, quite overpowered her, nor had she for some time strength or presence of mind enough to rise from her chair, till her uncle walked into the room, pale and faint, and leaning on Isambert's arm. That sight in a moment brought her to herself, and all her active and affectionate feelings were revived; and until her mind was set at rest by the surgeon's assurances of his patient's perfect safety, she did not allow it to revert for an instant to considerations purely her own. The first sensation which might be called selfish, of which she was conscious, seemed to spring from the recollection of that lock of hair, which Isambert had so incautiously brought to light. A thousand recollections of Lucien were associated with it. The anguish from which flowed the tears with

which it had been wet—the intoxicating delight which followed the first confession of his love—the scarcely less delicious wonderment arising from the discovery of her own passion, and the whole chain of circumstances and feelings which had united the days that had so rapidly passed since then, all rushed at once on Valerie's brain, and filled her heart with the image of her absent lover. She had no room for any other thought. Isambert was forgotten, and his declaration of love unheeded. But though her mind was thus occupied with Lucien, it did not interrupt her constant and careful attendance on her uncle, for during several weeks that he suffered under the effects of his accident, she never permitted another to perform the duties of his nurse.

During this period, Isambert, though a constant visitor, never mentioned the subject nearest to his heart. He lamented the rashness of that moment when, forgetful of his cautious reserve, he risked by an abrupt avowal the loss of what he sought. He now felt that he had not waited long enough, and accused himself of indelicacy, in not giving Valerie time to mourn her former lover, and let her mind settle into the conviction of his death, which every one else admitted. He felt embarrassed more than ever in her presence. He would have given worlds to recall his words—and at times even hoped for the possibility of Valerie's forgetting what he had uttered. But she had not forgotten it. The impression made on her had been at the moment vague, but it afterwards acquired all the consistency of fact. She brooded over it, with mingled sentiments of pleasure and pain. She could not resist the former, at finding that she was indeed an object of attachment to such a man as Isambert, and she lamented the loss of his friendship which might follow her rejection of his love. But still she found it impossible to swerve from her vows of fidelity to Lucien—and the very air of solemn singularity thrown over the circumstances under which those vows were made, gave them a sacredness in her view much greater than had she been but legally wedded. She also dreaded as much as Isambert, his recurring to the subject which caused her such varied emotions; yet she felt that it was not worthy of her, nor fair to him, to let the matter rest where he seemed disposed to leave it. She considered it almost as criminal to have listened to without repelling, as to have admitted and sympathized with an avowal such as Isambert had made; and she finally resolved, on her uncle's recovery, to explain herself to Isambert, and put upon a proper footing the nature of the only sentiments which she could admit either in him or herself.

Some women have the fine union of sense, and feeling, and tact, that enables them to do what others, as amiable and as sensible, but wanting in the essential requisite, can never accomplish, although, perhaps, their own happiness and that of another may be sacrificed to their indecision. Valerie was one of those who could well effect such a delicate task—and such a one was the communication she determined on making to Isambert. She did make it, in firm, and friendly, and even affectionate terms. She told him of her sacred engagement with Lucien—and she still persisted in expressing her conviction that he lived, and would yet return to her. She implored Isambert, therefore, to spare her from any farther expression of

his attachment—to love her as a friend—to banish all more tender feelings from his mind—and to turn his affections to some other object more worthy, or at least better able to reward them.

Isambert possessed great good sense and steadiness. He never, perhaps had forgotten himself so much, as in his hasty declaration of love. But he was now on his guard; and the attainment of such an object as he had in view, added to his usual circumspection. He resolved not to press his suit, but patiently to wait the course of events, the gradual decay of her present feelings relative to Lucien, and the growth of a sympathy with his own.

The winter of 1813 now set in, and a year of dark uncertainty had closed over the fate of Lucien. Valerie grew day by day more nervous and looking worse. Her health was evidently suffering from the gnawing uncertainty that oppressed her. Every thing was done to soothe her and keep her up, by her uncle, by Isambert, and her friends at the chateau. She received the attentions of all with gratitude, and strove to repay them by a forced cheerfulness, but the restless mind was too clearly evidenced, in the fading bloom of cheek, and the gradual decay of frame, which speak in terms too plain for affection to be deceived by.

CHAPTER XIV.

Among the various circumstances which acted on and increased those feelings in the mind of Valerie, there was one, so nearly similar to those of her immediate suffering, that it excited a deep and painful sympathy, which she encouraged rather than repressed.

Several of the conscripts who had quitted Flixecourt and its neighborhood about the same period as Lucien Lacourteille, had perished in that fatal expedition in which he was supposed to be lost. The great majority of these youth had marched from their native villages, with light hearts, joyous at the prospect of variety before them, indifferent to or forgetful of all that they left behind. Some, however, were less unfeeling—or rather let us say unthinking, for that is in most cases the chief fault of youth. Recollections of home endearments, of boyish friendship, or adult affection, came across their minds in all the sombre shadows with which memory robes our far-off objects of regard. The cottage hearth, the anxious parents, the playmates, or the one most cherished and beloved form, were seen in distant perspective, and the frosts of time and absence (more chilling than those of the North) were insufficient to congeal the everspringing fountains of the heart.

Of all the village lads who felt *thus*, one was conspicuous. I do not remember his name, although I was told it with his story—but it is of little importance now, for its owner is no more. He perished, miserably and ingloriously, in the wilds of Russia, snow flakes for his shroud, his bleaching bones his only monument.

THE CONSCRIPT'S BRIDE.

The thoughts of this poor young fellow during life were almost wholly fixed on Agnè his sweet-heart ; her name was the last word he uttered, ere the current of existence was stopped by the pitiless element that killed him. He pressed the hand of a passing comrade, and in complete exhaustion he with difficulty murmured, " Ah, my friend—this cruel north wind ! Aglao !"—and in a few minutes he was a frozen corpse.

His comrade was one of the two or three who returned to Flirecourt. He had many a sad detail to give to the enquiries after those who perished. To Agnè he had little to say, but to repeat the dying sentences of her lover. She caught each word with a fixed and intense avidity. She seemed to devour every syllable—and when the narrator had finished, she pressed both her hands abruptly to her forehead, and rushed from the cottage where the recital had taken place.

Ths girl was, in her sphere, what is to be found in every circle in city or village, the one superior person to whom the others could not help looking up. She was far above her ordinary companions in much that elevates the mind—in talent and information. But she wanted judgment, that important ballast without which the most trim-built intellect must some time or other founder. Aglao had been when quite a little girl, placed as servant in a religious house established at Amiens, and with the seeds of education there acquired, who imperceptibly caught what turned out a fatal after-crop of weeds—or wild flowers, quite as useless. Her quickness in learning was pleasing to each amiable recluse who formed the little society of the house ; and they vied with one another in encouraging and aiding her efforts for knowledge. But what they could communicate or choose to give fell far short of the opening curiosity of their growing proteges. Religious instruction and moral lessons were not enough for her. She sighed for the mysteries of poetry and romance, and she soon found that these were not enshrined within the walls of a convent. But Amiens afforded other sources for the supply of her wishes. Circulating libraries furnished her with the works of the poets, and the theatre embodied both their conceptions, and her expectations. By what stratagem she procured the books or saw the plays I know not—nor is it of importance. The effect, however, was of serious consequence. Her head became filled with sufficient of the fancies of others to make her hitherto unleavened imaginations ferment. She was born, if not decidedly a poetess, at least poetical, and into the ready channel of rhyme her now excited feelings naturally turned.

Her attempts at writing verses were really curious ; but they had no charms for her religious instructors, who on discovering her secret understanding with the inspired sisterhood of Parnassians, turned her away in disgrace, and sent her back to her native village, with as bad a reputation as their piety could establish for her. Once more fixed with her mother a poor paralytic woman, incapable of either guiding or restraining her, she gave a loose to her literary instinct, and read and wrote whenever she could procure materials ; until the gradual development of deeper feelings turned her into a still more dangerous pursuit. The current suddenly changed from the head to the heart—if physiologists will allow the distinction—and her passion for poetry gave way to that of which

the unfortunate had already alluded to was the object. The attachment between them was mutual, and it had a flavor of delicacy mixed with its strength, which refinement might hardly believe compatible with rustic love.

When her lover was torn from her by the merciless conscription, Aglae, in the natural extravagance of a romantic mind, elevated him into a hero, and herself into a heroine. If depth of feeling and purity of thought, devotion to the object beloved, and absence of all selfish considerations were sufficient to constitute the parties what she thought them—they were so. At any rate, the sequel of their unhappy fate removed them out of the track of common individuals of much higher degree.

During her lover's absence with the army, Aglae abandoned her mind to wild reveries and unbounded flights. She had worked up her feelings to an intense pitch of enthusiasm, and the radical defects of her understanding soon generated a disease that was its final ruin. On her early separation from the object on whom her thoughts were all centered, she showed an excess of grief; and when that subsided, it was as the burning sunlight sinks into depth of shadow and unbroken gloom. The night of her mind was setting in.

Month after month rolled on in hopeless ignorance of the fate of him, for whom alone she counted time. Doubt, and dread, and despondency came upon her heart in quick succession; and the sad fulfilment of her worst anticipations fell upon and crushed a mind already wasted and worn to decay. She fled from the cottage irrecoverably mad.

All the prayers and blessings of her infirm old parent, and the active attentions of her considerate neighbors, were exerted to soothe the malady which nothing could assuage. Its results, as is commonly the case from such a cause, were only dangerous to its unfortunate subject; for she was harmless in her wanderings to all but herself. She roved about the neighborhood from house to house, neglectful of all precautions against heat, and wet, and cold; and the effects were utterly destructive to her naturally delicate constitution and tender frame. Consumption fixed itself in her fair bosom, and its wasting influence was soon visible in the hectic on her cheek, and the distempered brilliancy of eyes already lighted by insanity. It was a sad sight to mark her strolling listlessly about the fields, sitting in fixed despair by the river's side, or suddenly presenting herself at the doors or windows of the houses she frequented; some wild ditty wildly bursting from her lips, or a thrilling laugh, the first startling notice that she was near.

To none were those wild visitings so painful as to Valerie. Often has she been roused from her own deep reveries by the piercing melody of the maniac's voice, singing her incoherent rhapsodies, in strains as wild and irregular as they. Valerie was the chief object of her torturing regard. When baffled to find her at home, she used to lie in wait for her in the fields and lanes where she knew her to take her solitary walks; and fastening on her there, she would pour forth her lamentations on their mutual sorrows, and trace with shocking accuracy the close analogy in their fate. She had acquired a perfect knowledge of all that was made public of the ruin of the

army; and she dwelt on every instance she had learned of individual suffering, winding up the most harrowing descriptions in the calm deep apathy of madness, by solemn assurances that such was the fate of Valerie's lover, as well as of her own.

The fixed and oracular air with which these boding announcements were given out, gave to the utterer an appearance of inspiration; and the heart-breaking feelings thus excited in Valerie, used to force her to run from her hapless persecutor—for the time more frantic than she. A wild scream or fiend-like laugh would follow her, as if the unconscious maniac had joy in the anguish she created.

It was in the spring of the year that Aglae's derangement had commenced. The summer had now passed away. Every day increased the ravages of her distemper; and at the beginning of winter she was, both in mind and person, a mournful illustration of the desolate season then at hand. Hundreds of wild fantasies had successively filled her brain. She had imagined for herself and all around her, countless transformations, incongruous and grotesque. The seasons and weather had ever a strong influence on these fancies. As winter approached, a new notion fixed upon her mind, so strange and fanciful, that it could scarcely have been succeeded by one more extravagant, even had it not been, as it was, *the last* of poor Aglae's frenzied imaginings. From the hour in which she listened to the details of her lover's death, she had the almost incessant habit of repeating the last few words which escaped his freezing lips. "This cruel north wind!" was hundreds of times a day uttered by her, in a variety of intonation and expression that made the listeners shudder. From the frequent repetition of the words, the idea seemed at length identified with her feelings, so as to become the ruling impulse of all she said or thought. She suddenly gave up all mention of her lover—all allusion to the scenes of horror accompanying his death—and "the north wind" alone was the theme of her ravings. For a long time she personified it with every attribute of terror, and shrunk affrighted from the demon she had conjured up. But at last a far different idea took possession of her mind. It was that *last* one to which I have already alluded. She now believed herself enamored of the fiend! Instead of hiding herself as before, from every breath of air, she courted the chilling breezes of winter, and in the most tempestuous weather was most boisterous; and when it really came from the north, her frenzied ecstasy was at its height. With her hair unbound, and none but the slightest covering on her shivering and decaying form, she would run to meet the blast, baring her bosom to receive its deadly embrace; and, almost breathless, and fainting from its effects, endeavoring to give utterance to the frantic expressions of endearment with which she apostrophized her destroyer. Many scraps of her incoherent verses, written at this time, came into my hands. The following is a pretty close transcript of the ideas of one of them.

MAD AGLAE'S SONG.

Oh, the north wind is mine own true love,
Let others find him cold;
To me he is warm as a d wny dove,
When he lies in my bosom's fold.

The frost-work glittering gems his wings,
As the live long night he lingers;
And soothes me with soft whisperings,
And twines his icy fingers

Though these dishevelled locks of mine,
That float so strange and wild.
Oh, God! and where is he who so oft
At their braided beauty smiled!

The NORTH WIND swept the plain of death,
When the battle din was done—
And he sucked the dead men's mouths for breath,
And he kissed the lips of one

Whose name must ne'er be breathed by me,
Who lies in a snowy mound,
Coldly, yet uncorruptly,
Buried above the ground!

But the NORTH WIND now is my only love,
He meets me on the wold;
And he nestling lies like a feathered dove,
Within my bosom's fold!

One night in the very midst of winter, Valerie was sitting in her little bed-room reading, or attempting to read, for her thoughts flew far away from the page on which her eyes were fixed. Her uncle and the servants had been for some time in bed, and the house was perfectly still. While she sat silent and thoughtful, a gentle tapping at her window aroused her. She listened awhile; the tap was repeated; and she stood up and moved to the window, which she immediately threw open, having no fear of harm. A broad gleam of moonlight came in upon her, but nothing was visible except the sheet of snow which covered the garden, and the pendant icicles shining from the branches of the fruit trees and shrubs.

The air was piercingly cold; so Valerie drew in her head and was closing the shutter again, when a burst of maniac laughter made her spring shuddering back; and in an instant the well known form of Aglae was standing before her.

"I thought to make you start, Mademoiselle Valerie, but did not mean to frighten you," said she, in a hoarse voice, which was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing.

"You have thought, Aglae," replied Valerie; "and it is not kind of you to alarm me thus."

"I would not be intentionally unkind to you; you must forgive me—for I do not well know what I do. It was very thoughtless of me."

With these words the poor girl leant on the window stone; and when Valerie took her hand soothingly, she found it as cold as ice. Aglae shivered in every limb and her teeth chattered together.

"For God's sake, my poor Aglae, come into the house! you are scarcely covered with clothing sufficient for the day, much less for this bitter night. I will go round and open the door for you."

"Indeed, I cannot go in—I am going to meet him—a little farther off, down by the river side, where many a time you have walked and talked with poor Lucien. It is now my turn—my lover waits for me. He is cold, piercingly cold—but I will warm him here!"

She threw aside the scanty covering of her neck, and pressed her icy hands upon her bosom.

"Dear Aglae, come into the house," said Valerie, in a supplicating tone, and unable to restrain her tears.

"Well, well, then, come round and open the front door."

"I will immediately, my poor girl," replied Valerie, hastening from her room. She passed quickly through the sitting-room and passage, without disturbing the family, and gently unbarred the door opening on the little meadow.

"Come softly in," said she, extending her hand, in hopes of clasping that of the wretched wanderer; but she was not near, and Valerie, on looking down the meadow, saw her flying as if from some violent pursuit. At about a hundred yards distance she stopped, and a hoarse effort at laughter came upon the sharp air, followed by one of those frightful fits of coughing which were the sure effect of her least exertion.

Valerie stepped a few paces from the door, but the mad girl instantly started from her halting place and fled. Valerie saw that pursuit was vain. She only therefore attempted to seduce her back by gently calling on her to return. The only answer sent back by Aglae was a half articulate attempt to sing some scattered passages of her song—and the broken voice died away, little by little, as the unfortunate girl went farther off. In a few moments she was neither to be seen nor heard.

Valerie drew back into the house, and retired to her room awhile in hopes of her return. She placed her lamp in the window, but its signal flame failed to draw back the maniac. Sometimes Valerie opened the shutters, and wrapped in a shawl she listened anxiously. She once or twice thought she caught the wild tones of the song in snatches—but nothing at last was heard, but the sharp whistling of the wind through the stiffened branches.

Valerie could not rest. She went gently to the door of the room where the man servant slept, and called on him to arise. He soon came out, half dressed and half asleep. She told him what had passed, and desired him to go forth and seek the poor object of her inquietude. The man readily obeyed, for he was a kind hearted fellow, and doated on his young mistress; and, like all the country

folks, at once pitied Aglae and thought it a duty to hasten to her relief. After an hour's fruitless search he returned to the house, and told Valerie his belief that she must have gone back to the village. Valerie hoped so, and lay down in bed. But she could scarcely sleep. The image of Aglae, pale, emaciated and shivering in the frosty air, was ever before her, surrounded by the painful associations she had awakened. But her fears for the poor girl's safety were lessened by the recollection that the river was thickly frozen, and that usually ready means of destruction thus rendered impracticable. It was late in the morning when she awoke from a disturbed doze. The woman servant was sitting weeping by her bed-side, and the man stood at the foot with a melancholy expression of face, and as if waiting to tell his own tale of sorrow.

It was briefly that Aglae had been discovered by some workmen, soon after day-break, quite dead, on a little mound near the river's edge. Her hair was frozen to the ground, and her body and clothes stiffened like it. The snow which had fallen in the night, had already drifted over part of her form, but enough remained uncovered to betray her to the laborers, and it was soon found that life was gone beyond all hope. Her fate excited but small surprise; and she was buried the same evening, with little preparation; for the village sexton said, that even the grave had been long ready for and expecting her.

CHAPTER XV.

The year 1813, which followed the disastrous retreat from Moscow, had passed away. A new army was supplied by nearly exhausted France, to take the place of the veteran legions lost to the country for ever. The spring of 1814, had opened, and with it that wonderful campaign of home-fought battles, which, more than all he had ever commanded in, proved the might of Napoleon's military genius. The memory of the Russian expedition was beginning to fade from the public mind, and the hope of new conquests was fast effacing the horrors of recent defeat. The buoyancy of French feeling, thus rising above the disasters of the nation, was in its individual development almost as easily assuaged. Private grief was becoming less poignant, and nature once more seemed to raise its drooping head.

The immediate objects of my observation, and I hope of the reader's interest, partook, with one exception, of the feelings common to the country. The first burst of sorrow over, and every hope abandoned, Mr. Lacourtelle became gradually resigned to his loss; and all his friends united in the belief that Lucie would never more be heard of—all but she, to whom even proofs would have almost failed to bring conviction. Valerie continued firm in her belief of Lucie's

existence, with that tenacity of opinion which so often results from the failure of circumstantial proofs on a mind resolved to doubt. Her uncle in the mean time continued, with persevering and almost persecuting determination, to press her to accede to the wish on which his heart was so resolutely bent. Entreaty, argument, expostulation, assailed our heroine in their turns, and when reason failed to change her, sophistry was unsparingly brought in. Mr. Lacourtelles thought, in fact, that any means but those of actual force were justifiable, to persuade Valerie out of a fancy that would be her destruction, and into measures certain to ensure her happiness. Besides this, he considered that his own chances of comfort or support in his declining years, depended wholly on the connection with Isambert, which every rational feeling seemed to urge; and when he considered that the well-being of that inestimable friend was also at stake, there was scarcely any measure that his conscience would not have excused, for the attainment of the consent on which all depended. He thus no sooner found one argument to fail than he essayed another; and he turned in his head a hundred stratagems, few of them practicable, and none possessing a chance of shaking the obstinate fidelity of Valerie's heart.

I have already mentioned the calm and well-regulated way in which Isambert received from Valerie the decisive communications of her sentiments relative to him. He recovered, by this prudent conduct, the ground which he lost with her. It was not that the abrupt and premature, though long delayed confession of his attachment had lessened her regard—that would have been out of nature, and certainly far out of the nature of woman—but it was that her reliance on his forbearance and considerateness was somewhat shaken, to which she felt herself indebted for the long suppression of his wishes. But he now gradually resumed his station in her confidence. He discreetly abstained from every word or look which might renew her alarm; and he saw that gratitude was silently working its way in the bosom inaccessible to the approach of a warmer passion.

While Valerie thus reposed in the most unbounded confidence on Isambert's delicacy and honor, and he, with redoubled caution, endeavored to confirm her reliance upon him, and Mr. Lacourtelles turned in his mind every possible method to wean his niece from what appeared her preposterous belief in Lucien's existence an event occurred, in its operation so mysterious and extraordinary, and in its results so important, as to involve directly or remotely the fate of every individual for whom I have been endeavoring to excite the reader's interest.

Spring was now advancing rapidly upon the frozen trees of winter, and Nature in all its varied productions bursting into renovated life. April had begun, the days were lengthening, and the charms of country enjoyments fast reaching maturity. The turmoil and terrors of invasion had however broken upon France, and the vicissitudes of war were felt on the frontiers and sent their effects far into the heart of the land. Mystery and doubt were abroad. Unknown agents of conflicting parties were scattered all through the country; and every social institution seemed tottering to its base.

Rumors of the Emperor's defeat, of dangers to Paris, of the arrival of the Bourbons, and a hundred other reports, speaking alike the language of what had hitherto appeared *impossibility* were now afloat. Every one was more or less affected by this state of vague incertitude; and it was a season well adapted for the management of either public intrigue or private machinations.

Valerie had for some weeks observed the peculiarly agitated and occupied air of Isambert, and for four or five days, a long absence for him, he had not been to see her. She made some observations on this unusual lapse in his visiting, to her uncle one day after dinner, but he seemed to waive the subject without concurring in her surprise, or expressing his usual regret at his favorite's non-appearance. He merely remarked that "there was no doubt good cause for it; and Valerie seeing nothing in the circumstance requiring more particular observation, let the remark pass, and occupied herself as usual in her afternoon domestic employments.

After some time she left the house, and remained awhile in the garden, in that close and care-taking intercourse with her plants and flowers, so much enjoyed and so well appreciated by every lover of rural pleasures. Thence she wandered out into the fields, and she followed whatever path presented itself without selection or care. Her mind, as it was wont, flew back to the by-gone days when she rambled over these same fields, with Lucien by her side; and many a melancholy recollection came fast upon her. She recalled the fate of poor Aglæe, as she passed by the little mound where the unfortunate girl had sighed out her spirit; and horrid thoughts of frost and snow and death arose in the misty fears which in spite of her would sometimes shadow her hopes. It was almost dusk. The sun was down; and she was returning towards home by the copse-wood path, when a rustling among the trees caught her attention, and she observed, at some paces before her, a figure cross the path, apparently for the purpose of observation rather than concealment. Without a feeling of superstition, she possessed a portion of the nervous sensibility common to her sex; and her long state of agitation had increased tenfold this constitutional defect. She hurried on, and tremblingly crossed the stile; and just as she got safely into the meadow she saw the figure again, but more plainly, standing in the shelter of the hedge, and clearly courting her attention. It was evidently a man, wrapped in a long military cloak; and, without exposing his face, he courteously saluted Valerie, and by a pressing gesture invited her to stay, while he advanced cautiously towards her.

A thousand notions rushed upon her, and she was for a moment transfixed to the spot. But while she stood the man advanced, and then, on seizing her completely, she turned towards the house and moved hastily forward. She looked behind her as she fled, and saw that the stranger had stopped, and by every possible attitude displayed his disappointment at her flight. Seeing that she observed him and paused once more, he took a paper from his bosom and threw it towards her, as far as it could fly, and then he retraced to a considerable distance, to observe her movements.

Valerie's hesitation was but of short continuance. She was now

convinced that this mysterious stranger and his billet had some connection with the one subject of her hopes and fears. She could not even in circumstances of danger, have neglected any chance information—and now the long sought intelligence seemed within her reach, and proffered through a friendly medium. No sooner did she conceive this thought than she hurried towards the spot where the paper lay. She took it, unfolded it, and read the following words, evidently written in haste, but for the purpose of quieting her apprehensions,—

“Fear nothing It is a friend who approaches you—a friend of yours—of Lucien—the bearer of his last wishes—of a letter written by his own hand! Have no fear!—but *be discreet*! Receive the letter, and the token contained in it. Speak your mind fully—but do not require me to speak, nor attempt to see my face. This is from a friend, be satisfied of that—and fear nothing.”

She trembled violently as she read these words. Her blood seemed chilled at the intimation that Lucien was no more—that she was about to receive a letter written by his hand, and containing his last wishes. The whole mystery of the scene, the hour of dusk, the dim light, the stranger, the prohibition to look on his face, or hear his voice—all threw a solemnity into the transaction beyond any common train of feeling; and Valerie was rendered utterly incapable of movement or speech, although her safety might have depended on either. The stranger, either taking her immobility for consent to his proposal, or resolved not to lose the advantage given him by her fears, came forward with a quickened pace, holding a letter in his hand. Such was Valerie's perturbation that she nearly fell to the ground, and she felt that she must have sunk had not the stranger's supporting arm upheld her. He, too, she thought, trembled—and that feeling gave her new courage, for had he meant her evil she thought he would have been more firm. Recovering her strength and fortitude, she determined to take the letter from his hand; and acting on the injunction she had received, and thus tacitly consented to abide by, she asked no question, nor did she make any attempt to see the face which was studiously turned from her, and concealed in the folds of a handkerchief, and shadowed by a large slouched hat.

“Read!” said the stranger in a hoarse and hollow whisper, which made Valerie shudder. Still leaning on his arm, she broke the seal. The page was but scantily filled—but she thought she could have sworn to Lucien's hand! Her head began to swim, and she was obliged once more to pause.

“Read!” said the same voice, with an impatient but not unfriendly emphasis, as if the suspense suffered by the stranger was still greater than her own. As Valerie, roused by this appeal, was about to read, something fell from the folds of the letter, and stooping to lift it from the earth, she discovered it to be a braid of hair—and on closer examination, she distinguished some of Lucien's mixed with her own. This seemed to bring conviction of authenticity to what was passing—and Valerie proceeded in breathless palpitation, to trace the lines which the twilight rendered scarcely legible.

They were as follows:

"Do not hesitate, dearest Valerie, to receive this as the genuine record of my sentiments. The hand writing, the lock of our hair, the sentiments themselves, all speak the reality of this address. I have been long lost to you, and the world. I must renounce all hopes of you and it. Reasons which I cannot avow, nor enter into, make it impossible for you ever to see me more. I hereby absolve you from all obligation to be bound by that pledge, which in the hour of hope and youthful passion, we exchanged together. You have many days of happiness yet before you. One worthy man at least loves you; he is my father's chosen friend; he has my hopes for his success; and if you become his, ye shall both possess my ardent prayers for your welfare and happiness. I thus renounce you, my Valerie, for ever. It would be cruel indeed to link you in misery to the fate which has doomed me to lose you. I write this far away from you, and our happy home, which after you receive this, I shall never, never see again. A thousand blessings on you, my beloved Valerie—and my father too,

"Farewell,

"Ever, ever yours,

"LUCIEN."

Valerie's agitation increased with every word that she read; and as she came to the conclusion of the letter, the tears which were almost choking her, forced themselves in torrents from her eyes. She sobbed aloud, and it required all her self-command, to save her from going into hysterics. She held by the arm of the stranger with both her hands, and she exclaimed, in passionate emotion.

"Oh, tell me, is this true? Can it be? for my heart gives it the lie! Can Lucien have renounced me thus for ever? Is it thus he repays my faith, and keeps his own? Who are you, mysterious man, that come with this frightful letter? You have desired me not to require you to speak—nor to look at your features. But I will do both—I demand of you to confirm the truth of this—to tell me of my beloved Lucien—and your hollow voice will not be enough. I must see you, to trace your features the truth or the falsehood of what you tell me."

The man gently struggled to shake her off and attempted to escape.

"No, no, cried she, "you shall not leave me; I will cling to you forever, till I find out more of this—I have no fear of you—you can do me no harm, that will not be better than this agony of suspense. Oh, do not, if you be the man of common feeling, preserve this cruel silence—do not drive me to despair—tell me where is my Lucien—what has become of him—where have you placed him—what force keeps him from me? Tell me, tell me, I beseech you."

With these words she sunk on her knees, holding fast by the stranger's cloak, and retaining one of his hands in hers; his trembled as she held it in her grasp, and he still kept his face averted, and a handkerchief held close to it. For some minutes longer, she continued to implore the stranger to speak, or to let her see his face—but in vain. He seemed greatly moved, but he increased his efforts to loosen her hold, and he was nearly escaping from her exhausted

efforts at detention, when suddenly a new light seemed to break upon her, she started up in recovered energy, and flinging away the hand she had before convulsively held, she cried, in a tone of bitter upbraiding.

"Yes, at length I see through this mockery, this cruel, this infamous deceit! Shame, shame upon you, Isambert! How could you descend to this? Is it by vile means like these you could expect or would condescend to win my consent, or force me to violate my pledge to my beloved Lucien? Oh! were his brilliant and beautiful features to flash their anger on you now, how would you shrink into yourself! Away from me—but I will keep this forged record of the base attempt, to strike you dumb, and make you hide yourself as you do now, if ever you dare approach me more."

She was then turning to go towards the house, when the man threw himself on one knee, and with still increasing emotion seized her hand and pressed it to his lips. Warm tears fell on it, but they could not soften Valerie's resentment. She drew her hand indignantly away, and without deigning to cast a look behind, she left the suppliant as he was, and hastened to the house.

CHAPTER XVI.

On Valerie's return home she passed quickly to her own room, and desiring the servant to inform Mr. Lacourtelle on his return from his farm-yard occupations, that a head-ache would prevent her appearance at supper, she undressed and went to bed. In that refuge she was sure of safety from her uncle's importunities; and there she was best able to recover from her perturbation, and retrace the events of the evening.

It was long, however, before she could calmly enter into an acute examination of all that had passed. The whole scene seemed swimming before her brain, in the confusion and vagueness of a vision; and had she not held in her hand the letter with the lock of hair, she would have half doubted the reality of all. Anger and contempt for Isambert's mean artifice were her uppermost feelings—but they seemed softened by an involuntary throb of pity, as the recollection of the burning tears, which fell upon her hand while she poured out her reproaches. Upon ample consideration, she had no doubt but that her uncle was more to blame than he, for she was certain that the plot had originated with him, and that he had even forgotten all parental delicacy, so far as to furnish Isambert with a lock of his son's hair, to mix with hers and aid in this deception, revolting and unfeeling as it was.

Again and again she read the letter; and while astonished at the accuracy with which the hand-writing was counterfeited, she thought

the sentiments it expressed were but clumsy attempts at describing what Lucien had felt for her. She was only irritated with herself, for believing for an instant that he could calmly and cruelly abandon her, for she relied on it that did he live, as she was still convinced he did, nothing on earth could make him give her up, and least of all to a rival. She was deeply grieved at the whole affair, mortified at having been even for awhile deceived; and a thousand unquiet notions assailed her, while picturing the wily artifices, and perhaps more serious attempts, of which she might be made the victim. The night passed over in this state of perturbed thought; and when she awoke in the morning she suffered in reality the evil which the evening before she had but feigned.

She knew, however, that she had no retreat from the persecutions of her uncle, if he had actually commenced such a system, and she resolved to meet him at breakfast without any allusion to her adventure, unless he himself adverted to it. Her chief difficulty was how to treat Isambert if he should appear; for she was conscious that did he choose to deny his conduct, she could produce no proof against him; and in her uncertainty as to what course she should pursue she determined not to mention his name to Mr. Lacourteille, nor to reply to any observation which might have him for its object.

The first remark which Mr. Lacourteille made, after his usual tender inquiries for his niece's health, was one very foreign to the subject of those personal concerns which so oppressed her. It was to inform her that the emperor had abdicated, that the allies had entered Paris, and that the Bourbons were restored. Little as she understood or cared for politics, these were points of too great importance not to command her attention, and it was turned for awhile from her previously absorbing reflections. In the midst of her inquiries as to further particulars of this strange news, she was almost thunder-struck to see Isambert walk into the room, with an air of unusual vivacity, while he stretched out his hand to her to receive the accustomed cordial salute. She started back, as if from the touch of a serpent. The blood rushed into her cheeks, and in a moment more she felt them to be cold and pale. Isambert seemed confounded—but he made no observation, and merely addressed himself for a moment or two in a whisper to Mr. Lacourteille. The latter received what Isambert said with evident pleasure, shook him by the hand, and almost immediately quitted the room, leaving him alone with Valerie. No sooner was he satisfied that they were alone, than Isambert approached her, and with an air of frank yet modest contrition, he said,

"Valerie, I did not expect this—not quite this—although I was prepared for some little expression of your displeasure. I see that you have, even before I could confess it, found out my imposture—your uncle has betrayed me."

"No, sir, he has not. He has not mentioned the odious subject of your artifice. The discovery was quite my own."

"Well, well, but surely you are not inclined to visit this innocent deceit as a mortal sin, Valerie? And heaven only knows how you could discover my secret?"

"This air of levity was alone wanting thoroughly to disgust me

Let the subject drop for ever. If possible, Monsieur Duflos, never let me see you again."

"Monsieur Duflos! and yet you say you know my secret? Come, come, Valerie, you jest with me."

"Jest with you! Alas! is the day indeed come that I am to be thus insulted by you? What else could I call you? Can I ever again address you by the more familiar name which our intimacy permitted? Is it possible after what has passed?"

"Good God, Valerie, why not? Do you think that a change in my situation, or the assumption of another name, should make any change in your style of address? No, no, you must ever call me Isambert—no other name shall be mine when I am spoken to by you."

"This is too bad—" cried Valerie, bursting into tears, "this heartlessness—this cruel, this cold indifference to what you have made me suffer—"

"Made you suffer, Valerie! What do I hear? What can you mean?"

"How can you presume to touch my hand?" exclaimed she, snatching hastily from him the one which he had tenderly taken between his. "How venture, how dare too look at me, after your debasing conduct last evening!"

"Last evening!" exclaimed Isambert, in an accent of surprise.

"Last evening, Valerie! I implore you to explain yourself!"

"What then, was I not sufficiently humiliated at the time, but would you now be vile enough to deny what passed, for the mean pleasure of making me repeat it? But no! I scorn you now too much to submit to that—from this moment my lips are forever sealed upon the subject—would that my eyes could close for ever upon you—you are now quite odious to me!"

"What insanity has seized on you, Valerie?" cried Isambert, detaining her as she attempted to leave the room. "You must and shall explain yourself. I call heaven and earth to witness I am utterly ignorant of your meaning. You talk of last evening—I was then in Paris—I did not leave the capital till eight o'clock, and I have travelled all night."

There was an air of veracity in Isambert's look and manner, that stamped authenticity upon his words. Valerie could not a moment doubt him—neither could she all at once give up the belief in what she had so firmly established in her mind. She thought some horrible delusion was sporting with her. She paused a minute or two—looked searchingly into Isambert's countenance—and said to him, with a tone of profound emotion.

"Tell me, Isambert, as you hope for heaven, did you not meet me in the coupe at sunset yesterday—of procure some one—or connive at some person's accosting me, and giving me a letter? As you hope for heaven, speak the truth!"

"As I hope for heaven," answered he, "I know not what you mean—I was in Paris at sunset yesterday—and I am wholly ignorant of the rest."

"What then did you mean just now, by what you called your imposture, by the assumption of another name, and all those juggling expressions? Answer me truly—in pity—and quickly."

"I meant only what your words made me suppose you have discovered—only that I have been all along known to you by a name not my own—that I am not Isambert Duffos, but the Viscount de Montmenil, son of the count of that name—that the return of the king allows my father and myself to throw off our concealment, to assume our titles, and avow our principles. That was my secret, Valerie—and if some other mystery of a more serious nature has oppressed you, acquit me of all share in it, I conjure you—and if there be a man alive who has dared to insult or injure you, give to my pride its full measure, by suffering me to be your avenger."

The rapid explanation which followed this speech, told Isambert all that the reader knows of Valerie's evening adventure. Such was the overpowering interest which it now possessed for her, that Isambert's avowal of rank and change of circumstances passed almost unheeded by. She only thought of him, with a pang for the unjust suspicion she had cast upon him, and a passing sensation of pleasure at the bright prospect opening before him. But her mind was wholly absorbed by the deep contemplation of her adventure, and the mysterious visitant. She did not give herself time to dwell on the minute details of the transaction—she only felt that it was in itself *reality*—and she started back from the painful and horrible sensations it excited. One thrill shot through her, which seemed to combine every feeling of anguish and delight—it was that the stranger was Lucien himself—that she had been once more *with* him—had felt the pressure of his hand—and trembled in sympathy with the emotion which shook his frame. The whirlwind of feeling that accompanied this thought was insupportable, and Valerie hurried to her chamber and threw herself, almost distracted, upon her bed. A thousand agitating thoughts assailed her there, as to the possible motives or desperate circumstances that could have caused Lucien's abandonment of her, and then her mind came round again to the one central point of its disordered movement, the wild impulse that seemed to say it was Lucien himself she had seen.

Isambert had listened with astonishment to Valerie's story, and had read the letter, in which such evident allusion was made to him, without being able to fathom the motives of the writer. He communicated the transaction to Mr. Lacourtelte, and they consulted long together. They could not resist the belief, extraordinary and almost incredible as it seemed, that it was Lucien who had written. The hand-writing was positively the same as his, but why renounce Valerie without cause or explanation? It must have been, they thought, that he had himself given his affections to another, or that he was resolved to try her fidelity to the utmost. The latter seemed the more probable notion, and thus they were forced to let it rest. But they took immediate measures to attempt once more the discovery of Lucien's fate. An instant application was made in the proper quarter, to ascertain if his name was included among those of the prisoners taken on the retreat from Russia, and of whom it was now easy to procure authentic information, in consequence of the peace which had just been made.

Isambert saw in this whole occurrence, turn as it might, the total

destruction of all his hopes of success with Valerie. Her deep-rooted attachment to Lucien was now too palpable for doubt. The very thought that he had cast her off, seemed to bind her affections the closer; and Isambert saw it was in vain to shake such a passion as this. His pride too, was aroused. He could not condescend, much as he loved her, to waste away his life in ignoble efforts to force her to receive his love. He was, in fact, worn out; and his late display of her feelings completed the revolution which such persevering discouragement had been effected in his.

Isambert still loved Valerie tenderly, but he could not love her meanly. He was determined to give up all thoughts of her, but in the friendship to which she herself had wished to limit his regard; and had he still wavered, there was a motive at hand to have decided him in this course. Mr. de Villefore had been his father's early friend, and this latter was no other than the emigrant owner of the chateau near Amiens, where Napoleon had committed the devastation formerly described. The Count de Montmenil, from that perverseness of feeling which drives people to run headlong into difficulties for opposition sake, continued in exile when solicited to return to France; and had no sooner found himself forbidden to return, than he resolved to come back. Accompanied by his son, he made his way to Amiens, and, under the feigned name of Duflos, he had for years lived concealed in the neighborhood of his old and favorite residence, and while keeping it up in the way we have seen, suffering all the privations for want of means himself, which at length forced his son to sell himself as a soldier, and into the service of the man whom he mortally detested.

When Isambert communicated to his father the circumstances of his introduction to the De Villeforte family, he gladly seized on the occasion to renew his friendship with his brother aristocrat, and he made him acquainted with his situation. It was this knowledge that procured Isambert so good a footing with the master of the chateau, who joined in all his and his father's plans for the remission of his sentence of exile. Added to their efforts, was the interest of the marshal whose life Isambert had saved in Spain, and who had promised him to use it for this object, the second favor which Isambert had demanded, on confiding to him his real name and his father's circumstances. But all was ineffectual to excite the emperor's attention in his behalf. The gigantic projects then in his mind, gave him no opportunity of thought for such an insignificant matter; and the Count de Montmenil and his son were forced to continue in their obscurity till Napoleon's overthrow effected their elevation.

Some time before this event, Isambert had confided to Mr. Lacourtel the secret of his real name. He thought him entitled to this return for his warm friendship and continued kindness; and, as he expected, the knowledge of his rank and opinions neither added to the republicans respect nor lessened his regard. Mr. Lacourtel saw that change in the political atmosphere was at hand, and his hatred to the Bourbons did not affect his attachment to one of their well-wishers. Isambert was prevented from avowing himself to Valerie, only from the apprehension that it might seem like an attempt

to influence her, by the attraction of titles at distinction, which he, notwithstanding, knew her heartily to despise. He requested her uncle not to betray the secret before he himself thought fitting, yet he did not quite reckon on his discretion, and was therefore prepared to expect Valerie's knowledge of the facts sooner than he meant to divulge them; nor did he, even when she received him with such violent repugnance, blend a reproach with the news of his father's public acknowledgement, which he whispered to Mr. Lacourtelle, although he attributed his niece's conduct wholly to his premature disclosure.

For some days following that which led to the explanation of these circumstances, and to Valerie's account of her mysterious adventure, Isambert, as has been mentioned, joined with Mr. Lacourtelle in forwarding every necessary inquiry for Lucien, and he also used indefatigable efforts to trace the stranger who had been the cause of Valerie's alarm and suffering. These last attempts were, however, vain. In the then disorganized state of the police, it was impossible to acquire any certain information, as to one of the many suspicious persons, natives and foreigners, just then straggling through the country.

The news of Isambert's real rank was received at the Chateau de Villeforte with great delight. Henriette made no secret from her family of her readiness to enter into the alliance, when her father now avowed to have for some time to have projected by him and the Count de Montmenil. Not one day passed over until it was proposed to Isambert by both the fathers; and, on the next, having received the assurance of Henriette's consent, he was formally proposed and admitted as her lover, and preparations entered into for the speedy solemnization of the nuptials.

Two dreary weeks drawled on, without any circumstances occurring to relieve poor Valerie's torturing suspense. At the end of that period, however, an answer came from the War Office, couched in the pith of official condensation, but to the purport that Lucien Lacourtelle of such a regiment, had been severely wounded and taken prisoner at the battle of Krasnoe, on the retreat from Russia; that it was ascertained, by inquiries made through the Russian authorities, that he had been subsequently liberated, at the intercession of the officer to whose care he had been committed.

A very few days after this intelligence was received it was followed by another important and very convincing proof, that tended, at once to clear away the mystery hanging over Lucien and his singular fate, and which gave to the afflicted Valerie a respite from the chief and most intolerable cause of her anguish.

She was one morning at breakfast with her uncle, discoursing, as had been for several days their wont, the various extraordinary and conflicting circumstances connected with this affair. Valerie now knew that Lucien lived—that love had been to her an inspiration, in unceasingly telling her so—and, in her usual spirit of wilful extravagance she could not avoid hoping and believing that bright days were yet in store for her, and her lover, in spite of his dreadful letter, and all the gloomy obstacles that seemed to hover between them.

Isambert's approaching marriage was a subject of great joy to her, as it removed the only bar to her perfect freedom; and now that the fond hope of her uncle's heart was beyond the power of realisation, she was delighted to observe that his mind turned with renewed vigor to the contemplation of his long mourned existence, and to efforts for tracing his retreat and penetrating the mystery of his conduct. While they talked over their mutual plans for further exertion, the village messenger brought a letter into the room; and Valerie's devouring eyes soon saw that it was addressed in Lucien's hand. She tore open the seal and read as follows:—

STRASBURG, May 8, 1814.

Here, on the very frontier of France, and quitting it forever, I pause before I enter on my eternal exile, to address one word to her who is and has been the first and last object of my distracted thoughts. It was not, dearest Valerie, my intention to have ever written to you again. I wished to spare you and myself the cruel protraction of an intercourse which now must end—for I never can see you again, or at least you never, never must see my face. My last letter told you this—and I with my own hands put that letter in yours! Yes, Valerie, I was the stranger, whose mysterious silence first alarmed and then deceived you. It was I who, at your feet, bathed your hand with my tears, and received the reproaches meant for another, as innocent and unoffending as myself. It is in his defence I now write to you—it is to remove the unfair imputation which your suspicions have cast upon his honor, and in doing this, in acquitting Isambert of all deceit, of all knowledge of the measures I have taken, I cannot longer avoid some explanation of the conduct which must lead you to believe me the falsest and basest of mankind.

"My confession is soon made, for it does not involve, thank Heaven, one moral fault. You know how I have loved you, but you never can know how I still love you. You are every thing in life to me, but you never must look on me again! In one word, I am no longer what I was—no longer suitable to a being of beauty and grace like you. Once, I may now confess it—with agony of regret and without a boast—I was not unworthy of being mated with you—of being seen joined with you, as your second self. I was proud of my appearance, I own it; and to have walked hand in hand with you in life, reflecting reciprocal ornament, and receiving equal admiration, was the bright dream of my early hopes. But ambition and vanity forced me away from you—made me discard the blessings I had within my grasp—and I am punished! I am now hideous—loathsome to myself to look at—and never more to be seen by you. At the battle of Krasnoe a desperate sabre wound disfigured me so much, as to make me scarcely recognisable. As I lay on the frozen field for a whole night, the frightful climate completed what my enemy's steel had begun; and when I was saved by one miracle, and cured by another, and could examine my disfigurement, so shocking was my appearance, that I was on the point of destroying a life from that hour a burthen and reproach.

"This is my short and horrible detail. I imagine you, as you shrink in disgust from what I write; and shall I ever incur the misery of seeing you turn loathing from that face you have so often gazed on in admiration and love? Never, Valerie, never! You must never see me more.

"But I was determined with my own hand to absolve you of your vow—to recommend your marriage with the man who my father's letters had repeatedly, but unknown to you, told me he wished for your husband. I believe him to be worthy, and I recommend you still to become his wife. Imagine what I suffered while I held you in my arms, knelt at your feet, kissed your hand, felt your bosom once more throb so close to mine—yet dared not let you look on me—dared not give utterance to one sentence to relieve my bursting heart, for fear of your discovering me. Oh, God! what agony can equal that of being, after absence and suffering, within reach of the object of one's love, without the means of telling her how she is still beloved! But my cup of wretchedness is now full. The most forcible passion of my existence—my love for Valerie—the most powerful weakness of my nature—vanity in my personal beauty—are both torn from me. I can never possess her, and I look on myself at times in my own despite, but always with horror and disgust.

"Once even, while I held you in my arms that dreadful evening, every thing I believe would have given way to the strong influence of my affection and my agony—I was on the point of speaking in my own voice—of discovering myself—and of dying, if it must have been so, under the withering expression of your horror—when you spoke, as you thought to Isambert, and spoke of the brilliant and beautiful face which you had loved. That phrase was my final doom. I then felt how your love was connected, was part of your admiration—how I had deceived and broken all its dreams of bliss, and I crawled from the spot, like a loathsome reptile, conscious of the loathing that would have followed your discovery.

"And now, Valerie, once more and for ever farewell! This is indeed the last time I shall address you. I escape now under a feigned name, into the wilds from which I stole, but to take my last agonizing look of you. I shall be, when you receive this, beyond all possibility of discovery—and every day shall see me plunging deeper into the desolation, which now alone suits the foulest blot upon his race.

"I can add no epithet to tell how much, and how solely I am yours.
LUCIEN."

Valerie read through the letter—with short, wild, convulsive movements of face and form; and, when finished, it dropped from her hands, which were mechanically clasped together in strong emotion; and falling on her knees, she would have uttered a prayer to Heaven, but her voice and recollection alike failed her, and she fell back in her uncle's arms, with a loud scream of hysteric laughter.

Need the reader be told of her rapture, when recovered recollection brought Lucien's letter to her mind? Need it be said, that she was rejoiced to find what had caused Lucien's conduct? Must I

stop, and strive to trace all the windings of passionate delight that deluged her whole soul, to know that she was still worthy of her love; Language, thank Heaven, refuses its intrusion sometimes—and readers have hearts as well as eyes, to feel what they never can see explained.

Not a day was lost—not a minute misapplied. Prompt as lightning, and steady as the sun, Valerie formed her plan and followed it up. Documents of all kinds were procured, of Lucien's identity and services—and an instant application made and acceded to, and carried into effect, for Valerie's admission into the sublime sisterhood of *Sœurs de la Charité*. Under the protection of their vows and costume, and furnished with a passport, which bore on it the object of her pursuit, "the care of the wounded stragglers of the French armies," she resolved to set out alone—to traverse the route which Lucien had taken—and find him, if—but she would not admit one doubt to check the enthusiastic inspiration which urged her on. She went to *FIND* him—not to *SEEK* him, for the latter word implied a doubt! Such was her way of expressing her resolve—and such, will every heart of energy respond, was the way to ensure success.

The reader has seen, with me, this heroine—for was she not one? on the very day, at the very moment she completed her vows for one year, in the very church that had witnessed that other pledge that was to endure for ever—and I saw her, such was my great good luck, part from her group of friends, and the crowd of astonished and admiring rustics, who raised their chorus of honest blessings as she walked away.

Her uncle, the younger branches of the family of the *De Villefortes*, and *Isambert* accompanied her, in close contact, to the top of the southern hill, at the foot of which the little village of *Flixecourt* reposes. From its summit a distant view of pastoral plains is evident, stretching far away. There the whole party took their farewell of *The Sœur de la Charité*. Thence, on her singular and perhaps unparalleled mission, set out *THE CONSCRIPT'S BRIDE*. Long did the whole body of observers stay lingering on the summit of this eminence, pouring prayers and blessings after the fading figure of Valerie;—but, her farewells taken, her parting over, she sent back no lingering glance. Her mind, and heart, and soul were all before her!

POSTSCRIPT.

It is now near thirteen years since the day I first saw Flixecourt, and listened to the recital from which and subsequent information, the foregoing story was composed. I have many a time passed through this little village since, but generally in the rapid conveyance of the Malle Post, which has no sympathy with the movements of the adventure-seeking traveller. Still, during the few minutes occupied in changing horses, I have always contrived to exchange a friendly word or two with mine host of the Croix Blanche, Monsieur Joly, or with the worthy owner of *Le grand Salon*, a little cabin at the upper end of the village. From these good folk I never fail to inquire after the several persons so often mentioned in these pages. The sum of the information I have been able to snatch, up to the time of my last journey from Paris, a few months back, is this :

Valerie, after a resolute struggle through such difficulties as might be supposed to beset a young creature unaccustomed to the world she fearlessly entered into, but without meeting any of those "monsters of chimeras dire," which assail some heroines, succeeded in the object of her pilgrimage ! Tracing the wanderings, which love alone could have unravelled, she at length found Lucien, in a secluded retreat in the very heart of Germany, where he had taken refuge from his own misery, with a benevolent and hospitable family. The particulars of the meeting I never could learn. But certain it is that Valerie thought (or at least persisted in writing that she did so,) that never was exaggeration so absurd as was Lucien's account of his own deformity. He had been disfigured certainly—but one side of his face was still beautiful ; and, although both were alike dear to the pure and exquisite affection of Valerie, it appeared that she took the handsome one for the model of these miniature resemblances, which, as a fond and faithful wife, she was and is still probably in the yearly habit of presenting to him. For she writes to her friend Henriette, long since the Countess of Montmenil, that nothing can exceed the loveliness of her children, except their goodness—the usual wording, I believe, of a mother's certificate.

But although Lucien was at length convinced that he was not quite hideous in Valérie's sight, he never could consent to return to France. He scarcely expected to meet such wilful blindness to his defects in any other pair of eyes, and he would not risk any mortification to that poor vanity of his, which, after all, we may suppose he will carry to the grave with him.

Mr. Lacourteille, to reconcile himself to the loss of his son and Valérie, for he would not give up his country to join them as they entertained, married his faithful servant Madeleine, and will I am sure be happy to give further information as to himself and his friends, to any one who travels more leisurely than I now do, and will pay him a visit.

Isambert, soon after his marriage, came into his inheritance; for his father having lived to see the final fall of the imperial spoiler of his shrubbery, died soon after being secured in his titles and honors, having first sold the old chateau, which he could no longer endure, and leaving his son the produce, with the other remnants of his property, and such interest at court as ensured him an honorable and lucrative place in Paris, where he and Henriette are, I hope, firmly and happily established.

The De Villefortes are, I believe just as we left them, for I know not if Camille or Victorine be married or single; but the chateau itself is within half a league of Flixecourt, and whoever may think it worth while, can there learn every particular.

Old Honard, the notary, who cheated the devil so long, is they say caught at last. He certainly has been for several years dead—and the reader will make whatever addition his charity dictates.

NOTE.

Reference having been made in some of the previous pages to the concluding note of these volumes—that *last* note must be written; and like all last words, those are certainly the most difficult to be expressed. When I undertook to give certain explanatory addenda, it was really my intention to have communicated to my readers some authentic indications of what was positive fact and what *embellishment* in the various stories. But in the first note I attempted I was stopped, by more than one consideration. On the very steps of the confessional I faltered, and doubted the propriety of unbosoming myself entirely of the insignificant secrets involved. I began to reflect that if a mere *story* is worth anything it is from its resemblance to truth, and that mere truth is generally so dull as to

require an air of romance to give it any exciting interest. The events of every day life, told as fiction, can delight and surprise the listener or reader, who gives small attention to them knowing them to be realities; while fictions, so very much relished when related as truths, lose all their charm when followed by a sober assurance that there is no truth in them.

The fact is people like to be deceived in *this* way, however much they may dislike it in other ways. Judging by my own feelings of intense disappointment at having mysteries cleared up and delusions dispelled, I cannot follow what I believe to be a bad example.—Romance readers cannot be too “candid,” but writers may be so. And I am certain that that author will best please the generality of the former class who leaves a good deal to their “imagination” and their ingenuity. In this conviction I have decided to let my stories stand just as they have done from the first; and so I confide this latest, and most probably last, edition of *High-ways and By-ways* to the public kindness which has been so favorable to the former ones.

On reading over these stories again, and comparing the persons and events with much of what I have observed among other people and in other countries, I am struck more forcibly than ever with the trite but positive truth that human nature is every where the same. Individuals of any other land would, I have no doubt, have acted just as my characters here have done, had they been placed in similar circumstances. The only difference is in the way of acting—not in the thing done. But perhaps it is from this contrast of manner that the very circumstances arise, which we too commonly look at as the cause, when, in fact, they are but the consequences? The common saying that “manners make the man” may be true in a much more important sense than is apparently implied. And if “the man”—that is to say character and conduct—is really the result of manners, how important is the study of what certain sur-